# THE VICIOUS VIRTUOSO

By Louis Lombard

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Sir Henry Seymour

from his old & true friend

Wm. Amos Fisher

Boston.

Oct. 30, 1919

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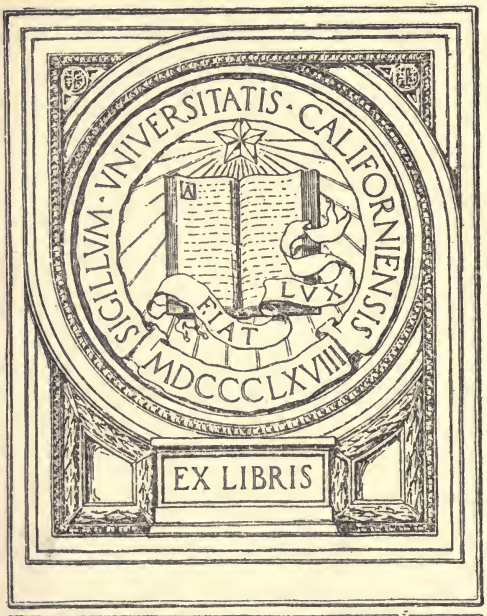
GIFT OF
Sir Henry Heyman

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# THE VICIOUS VIRTUOSO

BY

LOUIS LOMBARD

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EDWIN GOULD,

AS A MEMENTO OF MY GRATITUDE AND FRIENDSHIP.

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The joys of love—parental, filial, consanguinal, sexual, or altruistic—are but lightning flashes, while its sorrows may be eternal. Thus, though physically and psychically endowed to procure happiness, many a mortal in this vale of tears shall ask in vain forevermore:

"WHY WAS I BORN?"

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# THE VICIOUS VIRTUOSO.

## I.

An air of quiet and seriousness permeates dusty Montpellier. In the environs, picturesque landscapes teeming with a semi-tropical vegetation greet the eye on all sides. This quaint old town of Southern France stands on a low hill overlooking a narrow and smiling river. A monotonous sound like a hymn hummed by a grandmother runs with the waters of this merry stream which, a little beyond, expires with a soft murmur in the moist arms of the Mediterranean.

In the early morning hours one hears about the town little bells that dangle from the neck of asses bringing their own milk to the consumer's door. At noon, Basques in flat woolen caps play mountainous tunes upon a

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flute of many reeds similar to Pan's. In this odd manner these wild children of the Pyrénées announce to those about to dine that, for a few pennies, a long piece of cream cheese may be bought wrapped appetizingly in plaited green grass. When evening comes, happy folk-songs of Languedoc disturb those who prefer their quiet hearth to the pandemonium of dominos on the marble tables of the neighboring *café*. These characteristic melodies are sung by workmen and their wives or sweethearts on their return from some baptism or wedding, or, mayhap, they serve to shorten the distance from a suburban inn renowned for its rabbit stewed in claret. Now and then one's sleep is interrupted by drunken, though harmless, fellows who drowsily bellow a popular refrain with the goat-like *tremolo* voice of the numerous bad singers of France and in the style familiar to the inebriates of all countries, that is, each bringing his own part one measure after the others', and one tone and some fractions from the leader's key.

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Most of the shops are closed on Sunday, except the drinking-places. The trade of these is then best, because, though devout, the citizens are good livers. To and from the Cathedral of Saint-Roch stretches a lengthy file of neatly-dressed persons: the men in shining blue blouses or black cutaways; the coquettish sex, as elsewhere on the Sabbath, adorned with the most seductive garments they can borrow or buy. Some women are attired in a calico skirt and waist over which latter is carefully pleated a coarse silk fichu of blinding tint, just as their mothers wore; others dress with costly fabrics cut in the latest fashion.

The love of living peacefully with the ability to do so seems to be the birthright of these good people. Of course, there is poverty here. Where is there none? Nevertheless, judging from the jovial countenances of the lower classes in the Midi, there cannot be so much suffering here as among the plebes of northern regions. Cheap and wholesome wine, a mild atmosphere, and a blue vault above

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almost suffice to make the indigent happy. To be penniless in cold zones where fogs, snows, and blizzards make the opulent gloomy, must be unspeakably hard. What care men in a soft clime if their clothing be torn! The rents act as ventilators. What matters it to a light-hearted apprentice here, if he cannot have meat oftener than twice a week! Three sous of alcohol make him a Crœsus.

This staid, ancient community has its select few: the nobility, military officers, high governmental and municipal officials, college professors, some lawyers and physicians, and, at the bottom of the list, a few successful men of business. In this aristocratic circle the possession of money is esteemed below that of ancestry or talent. That explains why Paul Roland, an eloquent though impecunious barrister who had come from Paris with his wife and babe only one year ago, was already received into the exclusive *salons* of this conservative town.

Owing to causes often summed up in the

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polite phrase, incompatibility of temper, Paul Roland and Eugénie Duprez had sought in an illicit union the happiness denied them in marriage. Before meeting each other, these congenial natures had been bound in a loveless legal union. Separation, at that epoch, being the only relief offered by the Napoleon Code, they could hope to legalize their relation only after the death of wife and husband. Freedom from these hateful ties, unhappily, was to be denied them.

Soon after the Franco-Prussian war they left their native city, Paris, and located in Montpellier. One day their son's birth certificate was asked for by a census clerk. This document showed that Eugène Roland, as the boy was known, had been registered as Eugène Duprez. To spare her little one the ignominy of being classed in the public archives as a natural child, its mother had given the name of her legal husband as that of the father. The officious employé lost no time in propagating this salty bit of news. It fell upon

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the placid town like a stone in a stagnant pond, causing circles round and round until all the social waters were stirred by horror and indignation.

The principal reason why this scandal spread so rapidly was that the jurist and his mate belonged to a better class than did the envious clerk. Without that social disparity, however, it is quite certain that the unpleasant report would have ultimately gone forth. Acquaintances hear with interest of happenings in our life, if these may react favorably upon our "dear friends" themselves; otherwise, their attention is not really arrested by an event concerning us exclusively, however fortunate it be. It is when the occurrence is sad or ridiculous that they listen eagerly, that they read with gusto. In our absence a few talk about the affair with indifference, the rest chuckle over it. To most human ears evil reports are as mellifluous as the opening phrases of Lohengrin.

A couple hitherto respected by peers and

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superiors and envied by inferiors, found themselves pariahs to all, more despised than those belonging to the lowest set in India. They felt as if they had been suddenly turned into loathsome dogs without master or kennel. Admittance was denied them at respectable gatherings. The "good" woman could not forgive this man for having "polluted pure homes with the presence of his concubine!" Illegal relations hidden are tacitly accepted by "honest" persons without number; but, woe to the transgressors if their sins are published! At the club, which he had helped to found, Paul Roland was most politely told that his visits were unwelcome: executioners are always urbane. In the street, haughty stares answered Eugénie's humble bows; and even where sisterly love has been preached since the Nazarene shielded Magdalene, women friends cut her. One especially devout old maid whose chair stood next to that of Madame Roland, had it removed to another part of the church.

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"I pray for this moral leper and I hope she may be forgiven, but I will not be in the same aisle. To tell you the truth, I fear she might want to talk to me. How dare she come to desecrate the house of the Lord!"

Thus this bloodless damsel, who had never had the opportunity to falter, whizzed between decaying teeth her sentiments and those of her companions. And each self-respecting inhabitant threw his stone; some, a pebble, others, a huge rock—this usually coming from the greatest sinner who, by vociferous condemnations, expected to veil the better an undiscovered sin.

Why remain in a city in which they were abhorred by all? Because the sole means of support was his practice. A lawyer cannot, like an Arab, fold his tent and raise it the next morning in a distant oasis. Strict attention to business for a period of years in the same locality ofttimes barely suffices to procure a livelihood in the legal profession, even in new countries where competition does not reach

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its apogee, as in this crowded, anæmic, enervated, famished Old World. Prometheus-like, he was rock bound. She—oversensitive soul!—would have killed herself had it not been for her beloved child. Although crushed with shame, thanks to maternal instincts Eugénie found a supernatural strength to bear her infamy. This heart-sick mother now devoted her whole time to the training of her son in the art of music, in which she was proficient.

A man may throw the gauntlet to merciless society and yet live; a true woman cannot. Her former friends became so cruel in the manifestation of their scorn that, before reaching the age of thirty-five, grief wrecked her impressionable organism. By the febrile light of a lamp one night, at her bedside sat Paul. She was expiating her wrong by a disease medical science cannot diagnose: a cancer of the soul. Notwithstanding her sin, she had remained a faithful Roman Catholic, and now feared the cruel, unjust, inconsistent theological vengeance of Divine Mercy. As her life

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was fast ebbing away she placed her hands in his, while big tears slowly rolled down her emaciated cheeks.

"Do you think God will forgive us? How could I help following you! I have been a good wife to you, Paul, have I not? The Creator knew how much I would suffer through the love I bore you. If He did not want us to meet, why were we placed in each other's way?"

"My sweet Eugénie, it was inevitable that we meet. He will not punish you for that. All these years we have remained attached by ties of affection, threads seemingly slender considering the capriciousness of humanity. In each other's conscience we led upright lives, though breaking social rules. After all, was love created by legal mandates or religious dogmas? The story of existences passed happily like ours, eloquently proves that there may be sympathy and affinity without law and church. Can these human chains fetter Cupid? The fact that a mayor or a clergyman officiates

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at a union does not make the mutual regard better or worse. Owing to legal obstacles many others have lived until the grave without the marriage ceremony. Had these couples not loved, would they not have separated when a shocked world was retaliating by boycotting the man's business and slamming its doors in the woman's face? What hindered their disunion? They had ceased to dread opprobrium: a fear which keeps together many an inharmonious, though legalized, household. The worst being known, there was nothing to lose by parting; and they did not dread the expense of attorney and tribunal like the many who refrain from divorcing on account of its cost. These persecuted beings could have disunited body and property simply by saying, 'Good-by!' But no! darling! Just as we have tried to do, they too, chose to atrophy their sensibilities and turn a deaf ear to the admonitions of the well-behaved, rather than extinguish the holy flame burning on love's altar.'' Here he paused and pressed her tenderly to his

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breast, then added: "Most marriages are heralded by careful reflections. Financial and social advantages are weighed, while, more than once, affection is not in the scales. What, however, brings reckless creatures like us together? Is it a diabolical force that impels them to shock the moral sense of unoffending persons and to disregard results so detrimental to themselves and to society? No! It is a power divine! It is that spring of the noblest actions: it is love! And when the cup of sensuousness has been drained to the bitter dregs; when, mayhap, one of the two becomes physically worthless while the other stays in the prime of mental and bodily vigor: what magic power still binds these frail mortals to each other? Is it not love, love as unalloyed as that of a mother? From the lofty eminence of pure reason freed from conventionalities, from ethical fetishes and tin gods, relations like ours are more beautiful, more heaven-inspired than the majority of legal unions! Do not fear, dearest! If there is a better

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world, our marriarge shall be sanctified there."

"May Heaven be merciful to us!" she gasped, then fell back unconscious.

For minutes which to Paul seemed hours she remained apparently lifeless; finally, a slight pressure from her bony hand indicated that the spirit had not yet left. Her purple lips quivered, but no sound could reach his ear. Drawing closer, he heard her call in a veiled voice almost inaudible:

"My boy, my little angel, bring him to me, oh! quick, bring him to me!"

The child, who had fallen asleep at the foot of the bed, his face bathed in tears, was awakened.

"Baby dear!" said the mother, looking into his limpid eyes, "I am about to leave you. Be obedient to papa, for my sake. Do not think harshly of your poor mamma, whatever the world may say." Here she waited for breath. "Remember how much she has suffered. Those who love must suffer. Oh!

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never forget that those who love . . . . must——"

A ghastly smile spread over the ashy lips like a ray of the sun struggling through an autumnal sky. A faint glimmer in glassy pupils flickered an instant as a butterfly in its agonizing throes. And the lamp ceased to burn.

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## II.

Amid scenes in which he had passed so many glad days, Paul Roland could not endure the void. Each twilight brought suggestions of the beloved dead.

"On this stand there would be hyacinths, were she here. Poor piano! whose fairy touch can make you sing so sweetly again! Dear geraniums, you are withering! *She* would not have forgotten you! 'Tis here my darling laughed; alas! there she wept. Her place is empty at my table: I cannot eat. Shall I ever sleep with that form floating in the penumbra? Oh! the smell of those lilies on her casket!"

Three months after, this disconsolate man left for Paris. Eugène's aptitude and great youth—he was not eleven—gained him admittance to the free classes of the Conservatoire de Musique after competing with half a hun-

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dred violinists, most of whom could execute greater difficulties. The boy's soulful face in which grief was early imprinted had favorably influenced the jury. He was not what might be called a beautiful child; nevertheless, he impressed thinking persons by his dignified manners, his intellectual forehead and his brilliant eyes indicating a warm temprament and a poetic imagination.

The youthful artist made rapid progress. Diligent as gifted, withal he remained a youngster. To see him join so heartily in the games of other children, it could not have been inferred that wretchedness surrounded him. His father's health was failing visibly. No longer was he able to practice law. Copying briefs for other attorneys became his sole breadwinner: and a meager one that was!

The inexperience of youth has its compensations: a child scarcely feels its parents' destitution. In the midst of poverty Eugène's life was joyous and hopeful, overflowing with the

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exuberance of a lively mind and the sprightliness of a nimble body. What was it to him if the food and the wine were of a coarser kind, so long as he could drink when thirsty and eat when hungry! What mattered if he had to climb five flights of stairs: his young legs felt no fatigue! Their garret might have contained furniture more comfortable and elegant, but he never thought of that. His sleep was just as sound as if the mattress were softer, and his plain wash-basin held each morning water as pure as a Sèvres could hold. He had a violin, a collection of music, and a box of paints. What more could a healthy boy wish for? No one had marred his bliss by telling him that the latest book of studies cost his father sixty hours of extra night work, nor did he realize that the poor man no longer smoked in order to buy his son better violin strings. When thinking of his mother buried in the south, this susceptible lad was melancholy. Such sad moments, however, were as rare as short-lived, because his whole time was occu-

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pied by play and study; and into these he threw himself with energy. In any manner, he would have found but a few hours for introspection had he had the necessary wisdom for that self-analysis which might oftener be named, self-torment.

This youth believed in himself and in everybody else. Probity, generosity, faith, and other moral attributes reach their acme while we are of tender age. Soon after—first and saddest of disillusions—we awaken from childhood's gilded dream to the ungracious reality of man's selfishness. If evil-inclined, we, like most others, take teeth for tooth; if benevolent, we are regarded as a target and spend our days trying to parry blows.

At this stage of Eugène's career all things seemed to smile upon him; and as if to complete his happiness, the professor gave him a concerto of Viotti to prepare for the July *concours*. To be admitted to this contest had been the height of his ambition, and he leaped with joy at the thought. But, like the lull

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that presages the storm, so is that beatitude which, though only for a second, each of us has felt just before a calamity. A few days after the realization of this great hope, his father took him upon his lap and said:

"I must speak seriously to you, sonny. Time has come for this sooner than I expected. I had hoped to see you a great artist before leaving to meet your saintly mother. Don't cry, my child!" and stroking the auburn hair of the little one, who meanwhile was weeping in silence, he pursued: "Practice hard and carefully that you may soon be able to earn your own living. Fame, I know, will eventually come. Until that day, unfortunately—" Here he hesitated: "Until that day you must eat, and I have nothing to leave you." Ashamed of his inability to provide for his offspring, the poor man let his head droop upon the chest and with eyes riveted to the floor, muttered sadly: "Nothing, absolutely nothing to leave you. That which your mother and I saved, went during her illness. Since

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we came to Paris I have not been able to eke out enough for our daily sustenance. I have been very weak since dear mamma died. At the free clinic, this noon, the doctors told me I shall not see another summer."

It was without moisture in his eyes that the boy now listened. Although he was only twelve, he had been trained to grief. Like an experienced sufferer, he could repress the storm of tears which nearly rent his throat. Quietly he swallowed the big lumps that rose there while his father spoke; but this young spirit, not knowing why, to-day rebelled against Destiny. Why should he be deprived of father and mother so soon! He was not jealous of other children for their cozy homes and fine clothes, but why should their parents live since he had to be an orphan! And through this puerile logic he grew indignant at he knew not what. Early storms of this kind may permanently shake our faith in Divine Justice. During these moments of anguish the boy vainly cried: "Why thus?" and the first black drop

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of cynicism blotted his naïve soul. The experiences of youth are potent teachers; they often shape our whole character. Many dark deeds of middle life have had their germ sown during a murky childhood.

Paul Roland's ailment was mental rather than physical. Days of depression when he would moan unceasingly for hours, had acted upon his system like a poison. Through self-hypnotization he frequently saw Eugénie and spoke to her; she seemed to utter words like these:

"Bear your cross patiently, for we shall meet soon again. Tell our boy not to love; those who do, suffer too much on earth."

When coming out of his trance he always told his son what he had observed, and with great earnestness added:

"Yes, Eugène, your mother is right: cultivate indifference, never let your heart rule. I know full well that none can escape sorrows; that, whether soft-hearted or brutal, helpless mortals shall ever be the toys of unseen, cruel

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hands. But the pain is so much more intense in those who are tender that I would warn you never to yield to unselfish impulses, never to love either woman or man!"

In his ineffable despair, when all the bitterness of his past seemed to rush forth in a single instant of supreme crisis as if to crush him, this man's natural optimism turned to an irrational hatred; and with a serpent's hiss and a demoniacal flash in his eyes emphasized by wild gesticulations, he advised his son to carry pessimism to crime, if need be. Like a surly mad dog he then snarled and growled at the world, at its Maker, at everything! A moment later, realizing the awfulness of his precepts, and regretting his profanity, a smile would spread upon his countenance and, in a gentle tone, he thus ended his harangue:

"What's the use! Everything is for the best, after all. It is because I am ill, Eugène, that I could not control myself. Man should not get angry: it is weakness to be swayed by one's emotions. We should be master of ourselves."

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At the hospital for the poor, a fortnight before the Conservatoire *concours*, this wretched man returned his life to the Great Source.

The terrible loss under circumstances that would have been well-nigh unbearable to an adult, disheartened a young boy. The pupil neglected his musical studies and spent the days bewailing his misfortunes. When the contest came he was so badly prepared that the professor asked him not to present himself, saying:

"You are excused for this year. There is no need of worrying; due consideration will be given to the fact that you have recently lost your father."

No one at the Conservatoire knew in what straits this orphan was. His father had left only debts, in payment of which the household goods were sold at auction. The wife of the janitor, mixing a grain of compassion with a pound of practicalness, gave him his board and clothing in exchange for services.

"I have nothing for you to do," said she,

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"but if you will make yourself generally useful, I'll take care of you and let you practice your violin and attend your lessons."

The vague meaning of "generally useful" has a special import in the minds of sordid employers; it usually means "generally busy." With the sweeping and waxing of floors, the carrying of packages, and the blacking of tenants' boots, Eugène had not sufficient time to study. He was too proud to speak of his menial occupations to his teacher, and he accepted the epithet, lazy, without murmuring.

The boy's musical career would have ended soon after entering the garlic-smelling quarters of *Madame la concièrge*, had not a lucky star appeared at this hour in his firmament.

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## III.

THE first floor was occupied by Colonel Bon, Count of Danvré, a retired officer of the French Army. This old soldier was the embodiment of true nobility. His ancestors had handed down to him more than a glorious name. There is a legacy of fine feelings which may augment from generation to generation. The sentiment, *noblesse oblige*, had become part of his organism: an automatic, unconscious act —an instinct. The heritage of a new name, of a new estate is seldom embellished by so exquisite a gift. To relieve the burdens of others was the principal occupation of this gentleman; no day passed that he did not delight some one with a smile, a cheering word, or a handful of money.

A dashing youth was the count when, forty years before, he came out of the military

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school of Saint Cyr with one epaulet. Rich, well-bred, finely built, and possessing the traits that win the esteem of the old, the love of the young, and the devotion of rascals, the lucky sub-lieutenant seemed destined to lead a blissful life. The gentleness of his nature, however, caused this philanthropist, this lover of humanity, to suffer long before he was twenty-five. Yet, the deceit and brutality he found about him, though stirring his magnanimous spirit with indignation, did not shut his heart to mankind. From these struggles he had come out either indifferent or full of pity, never resentful. Now, at the age of sixty, he was more than ever ready to lend a helping hand.

Many years ago, while he was stationed in Rouen, a vagrant was arrested for having made some charcoal marks upon the white façade of his residence. The judge asked the vagabond:

"Why did you do this?"

"You see, your Honor, we poor devils don't always get food where we ask it, and when we

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do, well! we mark the house so that some other hungry fellow may know where to apply."

The culprit was given the choice of paying fifty francs or of going to prison. Fortunately, as he was beginning to explain his inability to pay, the colonel entered the court room.

"Charge that fifty francs to me, judge!" shouted the veteran in stentorian tones. "Man, take these five louis." And, grasping the hand of the amazed beggar, he added in a voice trembling with emotion: "During my forty years' service I have received some marks of praise: look at the red ribbon on my coat! But your speech is better than that. Yes! shout it to the whole world that no one need pass my door hungry."

Each afternoon precisely at four, Colonel Bon could be found at his club sipping an absinthe, surrounded by chums who drew their easy-chairs near his as instinctively as the sunflower turns its petals toward the sun, for, to all men alike his big heart radiated invigorat-

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ing rays. Bitter experiences had not made him a cynic: the world is a mirror in which one's own soul is reflected, and his soul was beautiful. This tender-hearted philosopher made it his duty to remember the good and to forget the evil. Of course, immorality disguised and prosperous excited his vehement reproof and momentary anger; nevertheless, in the end, the criminal, though great his crime, always enlisted his pity, his mercy, and his solicitude. Trifling wrongs done him, he did not so much as notice. Knowing that alone angels were perfect, the colonel simply accepted man as he is instead of fruitlessly deploring he is not as he might be.

"You seem to have so much faith in human nature that, my dear count, were I not aware of the fact that you are experienced, I might believe you have not perceived man in his true colors." The young officer who had spoken, did so merely to draw out one of those striking little speeches, which always edified.

"My friend," retorted Colonel Bon, "I

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was quite benevolent during the period in life when passions are strongest. My charity, through ignorance, was more than once misplaced; and possibly, some harm resulted. Indulgent parents, sycophantic teachers, and a large income caused me to misjudge the parasites and the scoundrels who first crossed my way. It was only after reverses came and actual life revealed itself to me that I learned to read my fellows clearly. At the same time I began to appreciate their circumstances; and this insight into environment, my dear lieutenant, made me forgive many sins. Have no fear, I see man as he is. I bear in mind, however, that there exists a large percentage of sincere and generous persons, and that, among the ones who are bad, many owe their evil propensities to heredity. Early training, too, does so much to frame a man's code of ethics that we should mix science and mercy with justice. When I see crime proclaimed in a prophetic anatomical conformation of the skull, should I not pity? When noting the manifest physio-

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logical signs of idiocy, cretinism, imbecility, dementia—absence or weakness of organs or senses, vicious conformation of the head, facial asymmetry, flattening of the ears, and other unmistakable marks, ought I not to sympathize? The loon crawls rather than flies, yet it has wings like the eagle. What is the reason one man must steal and another work: are they not both made to the same image? Alas! neither can do aught else than follow the path traced for each by Fate." Here he lit a fresh cigar. "Every crime consists of the act and the intention. No criminal intent can be in a man who has not the exercise of his moral faculties. The law should not punish one when disease has enervated his intelligence, disordered his reason, and deprived him of his free will. Ah! a fine phrase indeed is this "free will." When confronted with the all-overpowering forces of birth and experience, I ask myself: Is there such a faculty even in normal beings? We should certainly prevent the morally diseased from

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harming others, just as we place those afflicted with contagious or infectious diseases in hospitals, for purely hygienic reasons: not to punish them, not to revenge ourselves. The question is: Can a man, a weak mortal, be responsible for his evil motives, granting that he is sane? I doubt it for, aside from the reasons I have enumerated, there might be behind his motive a suggestion not of his own volition nor creation which, after all, was the true, the sole, the prime mover in his crime. Modern law recognizes the criminal irresponsibility of the insane. I pray Heaven that a nobler, a grander intellectual vista may one day reveal also the irresponsibility of the sane. At any rate, how can legislators and alienists draw the line between sanity and mental alienation which does not exhibit physiological disturbances? I believe that the self-appointed judges of frail humanity, be they theologians, jurists, or physicians, shall find many of their decisions reversed before the Supreme Court of the Omniscient Judge. My young friend,

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life has been so much sweeter to me through philanthropic endeavors that I wonder why more men do not practice charity, if from no other than a selfish motive. Where could there be more pleasure than in doing good?"

"I agree with you, colonel, but you must admit that indiscriminate charity may be a source of evil, and that one might exercise generous instincts unwisely, thereby fostering laziness and pauperism."

Here came an opportunity for gentle irony, and in that art this cultured nobleman was a past master.

"True, my young friend. Some years ago I resolved to act upon views such as yours. I was not going to be imposed upon by unworthy beggars. The first occasion came sooner than I expected. A ragged little girl had coaxed my spare change by telling me, between copious tears, 'Father is sick, and mother at home has no bread for my young brothers and sisters.' Actuated by suspicions such as your deductions should inspire, I followed the child.

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No sooner had she turned the corner than she began to sing and romp with some children she met. You little hypocrite, thought I. Overtaking her, I said, with some irritation: You were crying a minute ago when you spoke to me. How do you explain this sudden change? 'Sir,' answered she, 'I am singing for myself, sir! I was crying for those at home.' I afterward ascertained that she had told the truth about the misery of her family. Your practical suggestion, lieutenant, recalls still another case; this time, however, it is a powerful argument for your side," assured he with a twinkle in his eye that prognosticated the opposite. "Yes, I mean it. This time I had the best of reasons for being disgusted with my gullibility. One cold evening I saw a young woman begging with a babe under her shawl. The sight of that helpless mother and her child would have touched a harder heart. I gave her some pennies. At that moment, a detective jumped from behind a tree, and with his fist knocked down her little one. I under-

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stand your horror at the mere recital of this. I was struck dumb. Calm yourself, though. This child—would you ever believe it?—this child was but a bundle of dirty rags. You may imagine my feelings then. And this woman seemed so simple! so sincere! What a fool I had been! 'Pity me, sir!' she cried, while frantically embracing my knees. 'Ask the policeman to let me go back to him, or he'll surely die. I could not take my darling out in this murderous air: he is so sick! So, to spare him, I thought I'd make a false babe out of those dish-cloths!' Ah! had you been with me in that cheerless hovel, so many poor people call home, and could you have seen that creature's child gasping in the last stages of pneumonia, perhaps you would not care much about the risk of being too charitable. I think you might conclude it is better to be deceived ten times than to repel one worthy poor man."

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## IV.

"Do you play that instrument, boy?" queried Colonel Bon one morning as Eugène passed his apartment with a violin under the arm.

Through the guileless protrayal of his unhappy life, the orphan unveiled a soul sensitive and deep. At an age when others were occupied with frivolous ideas, he was filled with earnest aims. In an artless manner this young lad told his sorrows and his aspirations.

"What do you wish to do when you are a man?" asked the count.

This simple question moved the embryonic artist to a pitch of intense excitement. His ambition was so lofty that it seemed but natural to speak of it with warmth. His face glowed with the rushing blood, and from his eyes darted rays of fire—sparks that emanate

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only from the inspired in hours of profound emotion.

"I would like to be Paganini and Beethoven!" exclaimed he. The colonel could not repress a smile at this childish answer. "For their gifts," continued Eugène, "I could die! Had papa lived I would have had time to study all the while. Now I can only expect to reach mediocrity, because I black boots and do errands when I ought to practice and hear music. If I could study the whole day, how glad I would be! Mamma must be ashamed of me, if she can see from heaven. Her main object was to make a great musician of her son, and I blush to think of what he will become."

No design was behind these words: they flowed straight from the heart. Though precocious, this boy was too honest to speak with a hidden motive, as adults very often do. The simple way in which he related his pitiful story might have affected a listener less responsive than the colonel. Eugène's ingen-

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uous pathos, accompanied by tearful eye and heaving breast—strong evidences of youthful sincerity—won him that which an artful pleader, however brilliant, might have lost; for the sagacious old soldier had grown quite impervious to eloquent sophistry through years on the bench of military courts.

His first impulse was to take the boy and educate him. After a short consideration he resolved to hear him play before assuming so important a charge.

"I ought not to allow my instincts to wrong both this child and society by fostering another musical nuisance; too many foolish parents, designing teachers, and hypocritical acquaintances contribute to that rank and file. He might be ambitious and still lack the aptitude for achieving success in the art he loves."

After this reflection the count propped himself up with richly embroidered pillows, lit his Turkish pipe, reclined on his divan, and asked Eugène to play something.

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Upon a worthless small-sized violin, and with a bow crooked and nearly denuded of hair, the dapper fellow began Ernst's famous Elegie.

This funereal poem opens with one loud minor chord; may be it is the precursor of a life tumultuous and dolorous. The composer must have been deeply moved when an inner voice first sang to him this pathetic and fiftul melody which, mournful to the verge of morbidity, suddenly thrills with love, with life, with hope in exhilarating accents, then, resignedly falls into the clutches of death like a human being—sinful, despairing!

The young violinist's execution of the opening recitative Spohr wrote to this soul-stirring work would have sufficed to prove Eugène's mastery. His firm attack, exact intonation, refined phrase, and—rarest gift in a prodigy—his manly poise, demonstrated a budding virtuoso. Under the short bow the strings sobbed, meanwhile, the interpretation remained virile and dignified, owing to the

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good traditions from his mother and the Paris School.

Weak poets sometimes burn up with their own inordinate heat, but the fire of this youthful genius was kept within his control. Whether the sentiment be heroic or tender, grandiose or simple, he expressed it with nice taste. The reserve power needful to great achievements existed there. The world reverences composure in the face of upheavals, and a tremendous force that can hide the machinery generating it, is thereby enhanced in the opinion of mankind. This mercurial son of Gaul could conceal the whitening of his soul's sinews when lifting ponderous weights. In addition, notwithstanding technical defects that time alone could remedy, a clear, a unique, a forceful individuality oozed out of his cheap fiddle as a crystalline spring from its rugged cliff.

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## V.

TEN scholastic years have elapsed since Colonel Bon and Eugène Duprez met. Upon leaving the porter's den, the boy had found not alone a luxurious home, he had also been blessed with a new father. Having no blood relations, the count centered all his affection upon him and watched his career step by step with unflagging interest.

While the *protégé* received a thorough musical training, his general education was not neglected, as is the case with most musicians. The child had become a polished man as well as an accomplished artist, and to a superficial observer might now seem perfect. This view, however, would be ill-founded. Inconsistent as it may appear, although the guardian watched assiduously the mental and physical development, he had wholly neglected the

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spiritual side of his pupil's nature. The influence of a good mother was wanting, and the youth's moral unfolding did not keep pace with the intellectual progress. Like many distinguished men, Eugène grew more talented than virtuous. In the biography of geniuses this disparity between their special abilities and their moral qualities seems to be the rule. Providence does not intend to allot perfection to any one individual; that, perhaps, explains why so many intellectual persons are vicious.

As an artist he pursued high ideals. Strange to relate of a musician, he did not envy colleagues; but his temperament was extremely moody: alternately tender and cruel, lazy and diligent, philosophical and thoughtless. It is a peculiarity of æsthetes that they must pass through these conflicting psychical states every twenty-four hours; and this sensitive being was not exempt from that law.

Two cardinal vices overpowered him: untruthfulness and unchastity. He did not pre-

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varicate for the mere pleasure of lying, as some habitual liars do. His falsehoods, his machinations had but a single end—woman, his all-absorbing passion. When hesitating or remorseful he braced himself with the sophistic excuses natural to wrongdoers.

"After all," would he muse, "if I err, who is blamable for my conduct? Stupidity applies to man, not to God. Did He not foresee what my temperament and training would lead to? Why, then, did He make me thus?"

At times his amorous schemes were worthy of a Machiavelli. When regarding the game as worth his powder, he could be cunning, tactful, feelingless. In short, he was a diplomat and a *roué*. The principle, "Success is not always attained by the fairest means," enunciated by his father in moments of insane outbursts, had imprinted itself upon his youthful and, therefore, retentive memory; and to win the object of a passing fancy, he unhesitatingly put this precept into practice. A mad father's theories, his own bitter early ex-

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periences, and a mother's admonition not to love, had moulded a malignant character in one who, under other influences, might have become a model citizen. This young man who could be gentle to the verge of effeminacy, and who, for a week, mayhap a month, might be filled with a pure affection for a woman, would abruptly hush the promptings of his better self to heed a voice from the grave murmuring, "Those who love must suffer." Ephemeral Abeilard would then snap his fingers at all that is holy and become Don Juan for the hundredth time. Passing strange was that spiritual compound of sour nurture and sweet nature!

To-day, Eugène was a Bachelor of Letters, and a First Prize of the Conservatoire. His reputation as a violin soloist had crossed the borders of France, although he appeared seldom in public. The large income of his protector, with whom he lived on terms of perfect *camaraderie*, enabled him to enjoy an opulent existence without contributing to its cost.

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The two were like brothers; not as brothers sometimes are, but as they should be. So delightful a relationship between an old man and a young one now and then occurs to rejuvenate age and enlighten youth. Colonel Bon merged his whole personality, his aims and whims, into those of his comrade, who returned in marks of delicate appreciation a sincere regard more akin to respect than to friendship, for—odd to say of an emotional artist—his nature was cold in affairs of the heart.

Only that which interested or benefitted Eugène was considered by his aged friend. This is the reason why, to extend his *protégé's* musical education the colonel decided to leave sensuous Paris, and his comfortable club and cozy apartments, in spite of the fact that he was an invalid. The young musician desired to travel not for pleasure alone, although that was the principal object, but also that he might add to a culture already remarkable the lustrous polish attainable through careful observation in many lands.

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"'No book learning,'' believed he, 'can be complete. What do I know of countries I have not visited? Only the views of some writers who were actuated by their moods, education, and prejudices, granting that sordid motives or the desire for fame did not guide their pen. At best, I have seen only a dim photograph of the originals. I should travel.''

This Bachelor of Letters was also a thorough student of modern psychology, and knew how to apply the power, the very great power called, Suggestion. In order to gain what he wished from the colonel, which was an invitation to visit the Orient, he began a conversation from a point apparently far removed, yet cunningly connected toward the end in view.

"The higher conception of music, colonel, is a closed book to the majority of men, although no language is better adapted to tell their joys and sorrows. Harmonies that evoke an imagery sweeter than Virgil's, or more awful than Dante's cause in many human

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beings only a pleasant ear-tickling: the greater number cannot behold these lofty dreams. There exists a large proportion of mortals in whom music ends where it begins; in them, air-vibrations go no further than the nervous system, and die before reaching the sluggish imagination."

"Don't you think special culture may augment man's sensibility and his power of appreciation?"

"Most assuredly. The normal civilized individual, notwithstanding the superiority of his intellect, could not understand music better than could a savage, were that superior organism, that Westerner, wholly devoid of musical knowledge; I mean, for argument's sake, had he not heard even a scale: because it is quite natural for a civilized man to know something of this art, though he may not have taken lessons. What he hears in the church, the street, the theater trains him, in spite of the fact that he may be unconscious of this culture. It is therefore through some model

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or precept that we come to enjoy and judge the more complex forms of music."

"You say 'enjoy and judge': is it necessary to do both?"

"Yes, if one intend to criticise music. In this case, temperament is as insufficient as learning: the two must be combined in order to be able to form a just opinion. The best critic is he who, in blood and training, approximates closest to the artist; the main distinction between him and the musician is that the critic often is a passive, instead of a creative, artist. Should he be inferior, through birth and schooling to the producer whose work he analyzes, his criticism shall reach no higher than his own low standard, and consequently be unfair. By the way, when our musicians think they can write Oriental music without having traveled beyond their own shores they delude themselves, and must appear ridiculous to the barbarians whose art they intend to copy. At best, such European compositions can only be representations of what the western

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mind has been educated to call Asiatic; and as the models for this popular training were factitious, and ofttimes absurdly false, so are these imitations. To write the music of other nations the composer should study it at its fountain-head, among the peoples themselves: breathing their air, eating their food, reading their poets, and courting their women—in brief, he ought to live as they do. Then might the root of a national art be extracted. It is absurd to look for the metaphysical manifestation of a race in a musical score. How could the multi-colored states of consciousness be sketched in black and white! Our system of notation is too limited to enable us to copy in its completeness what we may hear in distant regions. We cannot even represent the notes of some peoples' scale. If we try to record their musical alphabet we are at once confounded, not possessing equivalents for the pitch of several of their tones. How much farther then must we be from the truth when endeavoring to bring out the delicate shades of

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timbre, accents, and dynamics upon instruments totally unlike theirs! And can we ever grasp the daintier and more subtile details: the subjective moods, ethereal soul-nuances of races whose very blood is of another color?''

''I quite agree that imitations of such music must be very incorrect, if the composer has not lived in the country whose art he copies. Let us suppose, however, that a good musician should study on the spot. Do you not think he might catch the local spirit, quite like a native?''

''I doubt it, yet, though he should fail in this, he might gain an immense advantage. By studying a strange art in a strange land, he ought to be inspired with novel themes, effects, and forms that would prove appetizing to the atrophied palate of our neuropathic public.''

''That being the case, why not travel for awhile out of our homogeneous Europe made so tiresomely uniform by our railways? What do you say about going to Egypt this

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winter? The climate is excellent there at that season. Extensive travel will do more than widen your musical experience; it is the best branch you could add to your university course. I want you to visit foreign countries to round out your education. At any rate, we shall find it fascinating to taste new sensations among queer tribes, after having felt the pains and joys of our own civilization. I remember how charmed I was when first I went to Algeria, many years before you were born. Though everything seemed different, in a short time I felt quite at home: it was so restful, so quieting in that placid atmosphere, freed from the restraints of our hypocritical manners. The sojourn acted like a sedative upon my weary nerves. I prolonged my residence to the last day of my leave of absence and was sorry to re-enter the vortex of Paris Saturnalia. I grew quite fond of the contemplative life of Mohammedans. A trip to Africa, my dear Eugène, is a sort of excursion into a past and present wholly dissimilar from ours, and the impres-

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sion it leaves can never be effaced. Your hours glide as if you stood before an immense kaleidoscope into which had been thown in lieu of bits of glass: Moors, Arabs, Greeks, Maltese, Turks, Jews, Copts, and so forth in characteristic costumes, outdoing one another in the outlandishness of the fantastic designs and colors."

Thus, as usual, the Power of Suggestion bore its fruit.

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## VI.

"I shall now speak at greater length of Egypt as it contains more wonders than any other land, and is pre-eminent above all the countries in the world for works one can hardly describe."—HERODOTUS (B.C. 456.)

THE two friends selected Cairo as their next hitching-post, and hired a dragoman named Saïd, an educated young Bedouin who spoke some French. Eugène liked this guide because he was thoroughly familiar with interesting subjects pertaining to Egypt, and in other ways possessed uncommon attainments. The reigning khedive occasionally commanded Saïd to decipher obscure hieroglyphics and to settle mooted questions of archœology and ethnology for the renowned Museum of Boulak, founded by Ismaïl Pasha, a former Egyptian ruler.

The musician admired the erudition of his guide and, realizing that more information

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might be got through friendly intercourse rather than from the relation of master and servant, treated him with much consideration.

The Arab did not speak French fluently; still, he could make himself understood by resorting, when necessary, to the Arabic tongue with which Eugène had somewhat acquainted himself during a two months' trip up the Nile in a dahabeyeh, with only natives as companions. The colonel was too feeble to have joined him in this excursion.

Although friendship from a Mohammedan could not be expected, the employer's tactics had brought about a cordial understanding between himself and dragoman. To complete the enchantment of the Bedouin, Eugène addressed him one evening upon a delicate subject in this crafty manner:

"Our Christ is perhaps better suited to the northern mood, but Mohammed is unquestionably the ideal man for your people. The sweet nature of Jesus, his abnegation, his purity—these are virtues that appeal strongly

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to our races. An eternal bliss of spiritual communion with God surrounded by archangels which my religion offers, is unsuited to your fiery blood. You would be bored in such a heaven, wouldn't you? Well, so would I. There are only a handful among Christians themselves whose soul can be so totally divorced from the senses as to rejoice at so tame a prospect. The greater number of our faithful, I believe, might be found among those who fear damnation rather than with the ones who long for this tasteless paradise. I, for one, could hardly look with complacency upon the loss of senses which give so much pleasure. Ah! but the Koran's heaven! That were joy indeed! To inhabit everlastingly tropical groves where vines give a shade so much desired upon your burning soil; where trees incline before you, the indolent, offering their succulent fruits, while you lazily recline upon heaps of roses; and where chalices of iced beverages so eagerly wished for under your hot sun are placed upon your parched lips by

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young, healthy, and lovely nymphs, intoxicating all your fibres, were paradise indeed!"

Saïd listened suspiciously. He was a genuine child of nature, trusting and truthful, but to take him for a simpleton would be an egregious blunder.

Being himself honor incarnate, he could hardly believe that the *Franzoui* had lied upon matters usually so sacred to Europeans. Eugène having observed this suspicion and fearing to have displeased, quickly added:

"I suppose you think me very different from the run of Christians. I cannot deny that I am. Even concerning universally accepted notions, I hold views diametrically opposed. For example, I do not believe Christ is the son of God any more than you are. He doubtless was a model man, the very prototype of moral goodness and beauty, yet he was only a man. An unbiased history may teach that Jesus was but a rebel to the Roman dominion, a popular dissenter trying to Prevent the oppressors' wrong; that his counsels were only in part

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religious, many of his efforts having been temporal and political; and that, if he was crucified, it was as a dangerous agitator, as a sort of revolutionist, rather than on account of his moral teachings. New dogmas absolutely unknown to Christ's disciples are to-day promulgated by our church; and this Messiah, in whose divinity the majority of those who knew him disbelieved, she, centuries after his death, calls God. To better overawe, enlist, and enslave Pagan nations, the church goes to any length: she swallows their customs, beliefs, and superstitions. From Constantine, matters grow worse; a long list of mysterious and esoteric practices contrary to the teachings of Christ and the Apostles is introduced: the divinity of the Holy Ghost, the cult of the Virgin, of the saints, of images, relics, and shrines, of the Sacred Heart, of the Trinity, of the Eucharist, and so forth *ad nauseam*, continuing to our enlightened epoch until the Infallibility of the Pope and the Immaculate Conception stick in the throat even of an All-

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swallowing Faith. Modern Christianity has certainly drawn more inspirations from the councils of Nice, Constantinople, and Rome than from her great originator. I must avow to you, my dear fellow, that, when speaking of himself, Mohammed appeals more forcibly to my reason than does the son of Mary. 'I am only the sent one,' says your prophet. 'I am a man like you.' ''

This logic reinforced by historical data more or less correct, and by quotations from his consecrated Koran, won the Egyptian, who thereupon concluded that this *nassara* was "too intelligent to be faithful to so idiotic a creed." From that moment he regarded the Christian as almost worthy of his respect, and he, who heretofore had been taciturn about beliefs, was moved to remark in the most earnest manner:

"No religion has grasped the greatness of God as has Mohammedanism. Our god is not The Father; still less is he one of the myriad idols of Paganism. Our god is not the Jews'

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Jehovah: that revengeful God of battles and frowning Master of enslaved Israel; nor is our god part of a Holy Trinity. Allah is far, far above such conceptions. He is the almighty over humanity, over the world, over the universe. He is undiscoverable, indivisible, incomprehensible. He neither speaks nor reveals himself. We do not circumscribe the Divinity by affirmative attributes, for if we said he is great, he is good, he is wise, he is powerful, would we not qualify the Unqualifiable by human standards? What do we know about greatness, goodness, wisdom, power—we so infinitesimal? All the books on theology, all the hymns of all the sacred parchments should contain but the words, *La ilaha illallah!* HE IS!"

"Bravo! beautiful! beautiful! If I listened to you much longer I too should become a disciple of Mohammed. Do you know that, not alone do I admire your religion, I also find much that is praiseworthy in the customs of your race. There are times I wish I were

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an Arab. Your girls are so modest; they must make ideal wives. I am frequently disgusted by the boldness of our women; they show the face and speak to any man, and, occasionally, do not stop at that, owing to the facility of relations between our sexes."

"Do you know what I would do if my sister or my sweetheart addressed a man not of our family?"

"No, what would you do?"

"I would stab her!" hissed he fiercely, while rending the air with his poniard to emphasize his threat.

"It would serve her right. If the same thing could be done in my country, many domestic troubles might be averted," sternly observed this Parisian, the last of men who could believe such severity advisable.

Saïd felt gratified to hear a foreigner praise Mohammedan customs.

"What would you like to do to-morrow?" asked he, as he was about to leave for the night.

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"Let me think. Do you know where I could listen to a real Arabian song? I mean well-rendered, too. Are you not acquainted with some pretty singer who has been trained in your music?"

After an instant's hesitation, Saïd answered:

"My sister shall sing for you to-morrow." And placing his hand upon the heart and then the forehead, he bade the customary "*Salam aleïkum !*"

The Frenchman had not wasted his stratagems. This Arab delighted by Eugène's kindness and the soundness of his ethical views—where is the man who is not charmed by notions echoing his own?—had granted a privilege seldom accorded a Christian. It is exceedingly rare in Mohammedan countries to bring into the home a man not of the family; for a follower of Jesus—a member of that most despised sect—to be received in this sanctuary was a great homage. Had Saïd been rich under no circumstances could that have occurred. But, as in all countries poverty is an obstacle to pride

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and etiquette is seldom observed by the hungry, this European's generosity and anti-Christian opinions easily removed the traditional Oriental barriers around a humble hearth. There was another reason also for the dragoman's startling invitation. Knowing that his sister Zuleika was fond of northern music, he wished her to hear the renowned violinist who, after all, was to him as nearly perfect as could be one educated in that abhorred Christianity.

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## VII.

A WONDROUS beauty, though only a child of fifteen, was Zuleika, with her small body as yet more developed below than above the waist, her slender form and baby-like hands and feet. The poise of her head and the promising contour of her neck would have thrilled Saint Anthony. The oval face of unmixed Arabian cast encircled by black luxuriant hair which fell loosely in undulating waves over translucent little ears, resembled a clear-cut cameo adorned by India's rarest gems. Whether the picture or its setting was the lovelier, would have been hard to tell. She had big, dark, almond, shining eyes over which long lashes languidly drooped; her nose would have been Roman but for a slight accentuation of the nostrils' curves; the mouth, somewhat large, revealed glimpses of teeth wide and

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sound, evenly ranged behind vermilion lips thick enough to suggest sensuousness; and her plump chin formed a delicate shadow in its center—the proverbial dimple that, so goes an old saying, renders a girl's dowry superfluous.

Approaching with a step airy as that of her pet gazelle, she drew up the left sleeve to free the strings of her instrument, exhibiting to Eugène an arm of exquisite moulding; and, as if to complete his rapture, she blushed, thus adding to the already ineffable charm of her bronze complexion.

> "Who hath not proved how feebly words essay
> To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly ray?
> Who doth not feel, until his failing sight
> Faints into dimness with his own delight,
> His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess
> The might, the majesty of Loveliness?
> Such was Zuleika,"

at whose sight a famed Persian poet had exclaimed:

> "Gods of Form, Color, Motion,
> Behold your Masterpiece!"

She sings the Arabian song, "Come, come,

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my beloved!''—a weird and wild melody minor, warm, monotonous as the sands of the desert, while accompanying herself upon a two-stringed violin, the body of which is a cocoa-nut shell. Neither her voice, in its metallic color resembling that of a Spanish woman, nor her peculiar songs, can please the highly-developed musical sensibilities of her auditor. For all that he yet tries to listen, but the sense of sight paralyzes the others. The virtuoso endeavors to jot down her tune; his eyes, however, refuse to pass from that magnetic vision to the music-pad, and the paper slides off his knee, leaving him transfixed in the contemplation of this siren. His head reels. The picture Eugène beholds acts like opium upon his brain, and, though his eyes are wide open, he dreams. Everything about him vanishes into air, into nothingness, everything!—save that immature Cleopatra with whom in a mad flight he floats beyond the stars. This brilliant Frenchman of twenty-two had basked more than once in the sun-

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shine of woman's best affection, yet he never felt aught save the baser instincts. His urbane ways, well-garnished mind, and musical endowments won him many a time that celestial regard, Platonic love; still, nothing of so magnanimous a passion, no, not even one ray of its light serene had ever penetrated his own breast. Instead of that, a malevolent spirit always took hold of him in the presence of chastity, and, for sinister gratifications, this otherwise fairly-good citizen, as the world wags, trampled upon the holiest objects. A beautifully wrought cup in which to quench his insatiable thirst—that was woman! Be she yellow, black, red, or white; be she fleshy or thin, statuesque or petite, golden haired or dark eyed, bright or dull, devoted or untrue, noble or plebeian, was of small moment if for the fleeting hour she seemed delicious. Like the legendary hero immortalized by Mozart and Byron, he, too, could in his past behold a long and varied flock of broken-hearted creatures:

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"Montrant leurs seins pendants et leurs robes ouvertes,
Des femmes se tordaient sous le noir firmament
Et comme un grand troupeau de victimes offertes
Derriere lui trainaient un long mugissement."

When a girl deserving man's loftier sentiments appealed to his better self, the other Me, lustful and cynical, sprang forth and dominated.

Was he accursed for being born out of wedlock? Was it his mother's warning that made him unsentimental, designing, gross? Whatever be the cause, his spiritual ego evidently slumbered, granting it existed.

Love, as this *intellectuel* understood it, was solely the scientist's prosaic law: The preservation of the species.

An acquaintance once asked him:

"What is the underlying principle of love?"

"That magnetic force which makes heroes of poltroons and scoundrels of saints," replied he, "is the irresistible, although nearly always unconscious, instinct of reproduction; without it the greatest calamity would fall upon the earth—the extinction of all things animate. This is the supreme law of living

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beings, and before its tribunal the slimy bacteria and the man of genius stand equal. One grand, mystic, ceaseless wave sways creation —Creation, that boundless cauldron into which generations of all sorts are eternally forming. Upon this planet, at each instant, some loathsome invertebrate sends forth a transparent chrysalis upon wings of amethyst and gold, and an adolescent thrills at the sight of a flower his inamorata gave; while, perhaps, at that same moment, at the risk of his ignominious life, some soulless ravisher, instigated by anthropophagous fathers, pounces upon a defenceless woman. Synchronously appear doves and vultures; simultaneously and through a similar process are born Neros and Virginias, though no human eye may compass the abyss separating their souls. My vision certainly fails to measure that psychical chasm, yet it forcibly apprehends the identicalness of the physical bases underlying those human bodies. Unlike as the crawling gnat and the swift giraffe may be the spiritual laws govern-

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ing two mortals. I suppose the gnat typifies my principles."

Such views were not apt to enlist many friends; the majority hardly allow science on this all-dominating subject to carry them so far from the domain of poetic sentiments. Consequently, Eugène was regarded as a most eccentric fellow, if nothing worse.

Upon other questions, his heart was conceded to be in the right place. For instance, though callous and scheming in love affairs, he was severely correct in matters of friendship—an anomaly peculiarly masculine.

In the presence of Zuleika he now felt a nascent tenderness, an indescribable something each mortal has experienced at least once in a lifetime, usually during his teens. The enchantress threw a spell over this hitherto invulnerable Frenchman, and he revelled in the novel snare, in the intangible love-woven net that momentarily imprisoned him. Fortunately, a guardian angel in the garb of Friend-

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ship came at this dangerous pass to dispel the enchantment.

"I am sorry that girl's brother is such a fine chap," mused Eugène. "If there is any truth in the theory of souls' affinity, my soul has found its mate. Were not Saïd so kind to me, I would move heaven and earth to possess this celestial fairy."

Immediately after playing the violin solo promised the night before to his dragoman, he locked up his violin box, saying:

"Let me thank you and your sister for her interesting music. I must hasten to the colonel. Good-by!"

Conscious of having done well by ending abruptly an interview he would have prolonged had he obeyed his lower impulses, and with the resolution to dissipate all thought of the little Arab, the *Franzoui*—drove away in his victoria, unwittingly taking along the peace of this white-domed dwelling.

Did some good angel whisper into the young woman's ear, "Forget this man! Though you

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think him the best that lives, he is not what he seems to an ignorant lass; he is unworthy of you, and if you persist in your foolish hope to win his affection, an everlasting crown of thorns shall fill your eyes with blood and tears!"

If such a voice spoke, she did not heed it. Mysterious and awful auto-mesmerism! this belief that we are fascinated and cannot escape our self-created Mesmer.

However young, however inexperienced be a woman, she has a wonderful intuition in heart problems. Although totally unacquainted with the ways of the world, Zuleika knew that lovers cannot escape sorrow, though their affection be profound and mutual; she was aware also that the spoiled child of Parisiènnes might soon tire of a little barbarian, no matter how sweet and thoughtful she be; yet she was willing to risk everything for his love —happiness, honor, health, life, eternal rest.

That night is her first sleepless one. Her eyes are closed, but she is awake listening to

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an occult violin whose sylph-like harmonics reverberate again and again from the walls of her bed-chamber; now, softly as the buzzing of an insect, then gently creeping into her ear and insensibly swelling to a climax of blaring trumpet-sounds vast as the Mosque of Méhémet-Ali.

In this subjective mood, intensified by her nervous, semi-hysterical temperament, the player's features slowly emerge from a milky cloud to impress a burning kiss upon passive virgin lips.

Her first impulse when arising is to tell her dream to the old servant, Uarda, as she is wont to do. Upon second thought she hesitates.

"It was not a dream, anyway. What would Uarda think of such silly imaginings. She would surely advise me not to mention again the name of one so despised by Mohammed."

The outpourings of a heart Cupid enters for the first time can no more be stemmed than the ebb and flow of the ocean. When

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there is nothing better at hand, it is a poodle or a kitten that is told of the heart's first tempest; may be it is a Marguerite which hears, while its silken petals fall, "He loves me, he loves me not." Zuleika had no mother to whom she might outpour her tender effusions; her father, too, was dead. In any manner, she would have kept her secret from both. Children speak to parents upon such matters only at last resort: a schoolmate, a servant, even a stranger is oftener the first discoverer of that beauteous bud on the stem of a soul.

While combing her mistress' hair Uarda noticed an expression of lassitude in her eyes.

"Are you ill? You look quite fatigued, my child."

"No, Uarda, thanks. I am very well."

"Why, then, do you seem so bewildered? Have you not slept soundly? Do tell me. Do not hide it from me: you have cried, I can tell it from the redness of your eyes. What is troubling my dear babe?"

Here the flow of emotions could no longer be

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checked, and between sobs, the girl recited her night and day dreams, whence, alas! she was doomed to awaken only in death.

"I would give my life for him, Uarda!"

"Dear, deluded lamb! Are you not aware that impassable obstacles separate you? He is rich, you have nothing. On account of your good looks this might be overlooked by a *Franzoui:* I don't know what are the customs of his land." (She evidently did not for, in France, without dowry, even a belle finds it difficult to marry above her pecuniary rank.) "What I do know, however, is that your brother would not let you marry a Christian. Don't cry, my doll, my dearest! Most likely this man has forgotten you before this. You should do the same. How babyish to poison your days with such thoughts!"

The diminutive *harim* had wiped away her tears and stood silent, motionless, with her small fists clinched, her lips tightly drawn together, and her long lashes veiling semi-closed pupils that aimed straight at the curled sharp

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tips of her dainty red sandals—an evil-foreboding attitude the old servant observed with anguish, knowing its ominous significance.

Uarda, being like a mother to Zuleika, having cared for her since the cradle, felt a mother's grief at this unwise determination.

"Oh! what shall I do to save you from this terrible fate? If I were your mother, instead of your poor old nurse, I would flog you to alter your mad purpose. My darling, for heaven's sake, don't tell Saïd! You don't know what he might do to a filthy Christian dog!"

"I don't care," shouted the now enraged girl. "I shall tell him, and I'll give him the choice between Zuleika dead, or Zuleika the wife, yes, if need be, the mistress of that Christian dog!"

Sparks of fire darted from dazzling orbits freed from their lids, giving her face a ferocious mien, and Uarda, terrified, unable to say another word, wept.

This young woman, though admirable in

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many respects, was, as has just been exemplified, far from perfect. Though she usually was gentle as a child and simple of manner as one unconscious of attractiveness, now and then, her one overmastering vice— an uncontrollable will — gained complete victory over a modest, quiet, and tender nature. Circumstances had helped to develop this abnormal faculty since she was old enough to manifest a wish. From her nursery days Zuleika had commanded, and those around obeyed. As a mere tot, if she would have a toy it had to be brought, otherwise she refused to eat. This spirit of domination gradually became a law to her family, who tolerated it as a childish whim, largely on account of the fact that it had never been exercised for serious purposes.

The will depends neither upon moral nor immoral qualities. It is a distinct state of consciousness which may exist in the best as well as the worst of men. Nor is it akin to courage or intellect. Saïd was wise and fear-

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less; of the two, he had the superior character, yet he yielded to the stronger will of his sister. Her parents having concluded from the dawn of life that it was impossible to cure their daughter of this obduracy, indulged her in it. In that they erred: a special education could have weakened this natural tendency. "Who loves well chastises," says an old proverb. Zuleika's parents had loved unwisely. The unrestrained will of a capricious child unfolded more and more rigid, and the reed that might have bent as a garland of wheat grew into a gnarled twig of steel.

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## VIII.

One afternoon, a few days later, Eugène and his guide were sipping tiny cups of mocha in the Ezbekieh Gardens while listening to the atrocious wailings of the khedive's band, which, to Arab ears, passes for Western music.

"What shall we do to-morrow, Saïd? I have seen practically everything worth visiting in and around Cairo. Could you not suggest some new trip? I am tired of the beaten track of travelers."

For a few seconds the dragoman was plunged in a deep reverie. At this instant violent feelings agitated his soul, but his fatalistic religion having early taught him to repress outward manifestations, he remained impassive. Little did Eugène infer that his apparently calm companion was debating within

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himself: "Shall I disembowel that cur, or shall I make him happy and famous?" In any manner, had the musician heard this tacit query, he could not have unfathomed its cause, for he could not know that, only an hour before, Zuleika had told her passion to Saïd, who now hesitated to obey the command, "Make him love me!"

Brotherly tenderness finally conquered his hatred and he decided to gratify her mad desire. Martyrdom does not always consist in bodily tortures nor in death. This Mohammedan's self-abnegation and renunciation of racial, moral, and religious principles to please an adored sister, was as heroic as the suffering of many a martyr.

The silence had lengthened oppressively.

"What is the matter?" ejaculated the employer, slightly annoyed.

"Oh! pardon me. I wanted to reflect a little before deciding." Surveying the neighboring tables to ascertain they were far enough away, and to make doubly sure that his re-

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marks would not be overheard, he drew his chair close to the Frenchman's. With a mystifying air, and in a voice low and persuasive, he continued:

"Do you know that I have formed a peculiar attachment for you? I believe I could do anything in your behalf. You certainly are too bright to believe this nonsense without proofs. Well! I intend to give you an unequivocal guarantee of my friendship."

Journeying up the Nile, Eugène had had ample opportunity to appreciate his dragoman's intellect. To reconcile this unexpected gush with the inflexible prejudices of a learned Oriental might be difficult to an European nincompoop; to this clever Parisian it was impossible. He simply nodded his thanks, while Saïd went on:

"To prove to you the extent of my regard, I am going to give you the fruit of my life's researches. I shall show you what no other living man has seen. I'll open a concealed portal in the Cheop's Pyramid leading to a

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hall never entered since that famous tomb was built. If any mortal has gone there, he did not divulge the fact, for there exists no known record of this vast chamber. Though I have not yet visited it, I am positive I shall find it by the aid of directions I discovered in the Necropolis of Sakkara. Through inscriptions in one of the granite coffins of the sacred bulls, I deciphered almost by accident the way to this unknown hall. I also read that its walls are covered with figures of material objects from every sphere of nature and art, together with mystical and mathematical symbols. Owls, snails, hexagons, rhomboids, triangles, axes, squares, elephants, birds, bulls, faces of gods, goddesses, and emperors, and stranger signs are written in granite, as in the sarcophagus of Sakkara. This particular monumental writing has not come to the notice of another Egyptologist; no man save Saïd can unravel its meaning. It has taken me ten years of study and practice to get a correct interpretation of these rare hieroglyphics,

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though trained from childhood in the science of sacred characters and Egyptology. These writings, *khawageh*, are unlike anything ever grasped by our greatest historian, be he Herodotus or Lepsius. The marks I'll translate to you are based upon an alphabetical system, while all the ancient signs known were founded upon two other systems which, though differing, were yet connected: the ideographic which, by the introduction of familiar symbols sought to express thoughts and events; and the phonetic, representing words by symbols and their sounds. If the principles I learned in Sakkara do not mislead," pursued Saïd, now thoroughly excited, "I shall read you a wonderful historical record, a narrative beginning back of the Pagan period of Egyptian history, before which not even a legend has reached us. Behind the seventy centuries of uninterrupted annals, I'll recite new and marvelous facts from indubitable evidence. Historians, as you know, stop at the commencement of the Pharaonic antiquity, when Egypt,

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the ancestor of nations, seems to rise as at the origin of all time from the depths of an eternal night; but I shall start long before that era of the world's history. Antedating all biblical documents, Saïd will even precede by a myriad years the reign of the first Pharaoh, Ménès. What a wondrous parchment roll the future chronicler shall then unfold! Starting when the Romans and the Greeks were hordes of cannibals more kindred to the orang-outang than to the present man, and when the Western world was not even a dream, he will translate the indelible signs carved in those granite walls, telling the birth, rise, and fall of a great nation now wholly extinct which dwelled in this same privileged land of Egypt whose territory nourishes an obedient race, and the fertility of whose soil is proverbial as the softness of its clime and the virtue of its women. This narrator of the world's unbroken annals will then be able to connect the beginnings of all human activity to the Pagan, Christian, Mussulman, and contemporaneous periods. He

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will find the origin of the Cheops' dynasty and the motives that led to the building of those fabulous pyramids modern art cannot equal. From the Pharaohs he will proceed to the vicissitudes of this nation under the cruel, though now lettered, sons of Rome and Athens, and he will record the philosophical researches of the various sects in Alexandria who started the grand intellectual movement whence issued our modern world from a chaos of human fallacies. At this stage, the annalist will reach the middle ages with their inimitable Arabic art creating indescribable marvels. Later, the Crusaders and their useless butcheries will come upon the scene, soon to be followed by that inordinately selfish Corsican who'll say to his hypnotized French hounds: 'Soldiers! From these pyramids forty centuries of glory look down upon you!'

Lastly, reaching down to our own day, the undeservedly famous engineer will carry off some sand to reopen an ancient way to the Red Sea for the floating piratical cities

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propelled by steam and bound for the looting of India and China."

These words were accompanied with fitting gestures and an impressive facial expression. Saïd's voice had grown louder, and big drops of perspiration trickled down his bronzed forehead. At the end of the speech, his tone regained its natural suavity, and he added, almost imploringly:

"I am a humble Bedouin; you are famous and wealthy. I dwell in a country which hardly values intellectual efforts; you, on the other hand, reside in Paris, in that capital of the peoples where great deeds are prized and whence throughout the earth resounds their doer's name. Aside from the satisfaction of vanity, this discovery, at best, can only be of small use to me. To you, it means more admiration, more renown, more riches and power, for it shall proclaim you the earth's leading historian. In brief, I want you to claim my knowledge as your own."

Eugène, who had followed him closely, at

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this moment felt certain of having discovered the wily spring of this apparently generous proffer.

"If you do this, Saïd, and let me claim the find exclusively, I'll give you ten thousand francs."

"You have misunderstood me, *khawageh*," sharply retorted the dragoman with a haughty and disdainful glance, which, quick as a flash, changed to an expression of kindliness so as not to defeat his own strange device. "Although I am poor, money is not everything to me. I told you I liked you, and said I would prove it. I shall do as I promised, but, I beg of you, *khawageh*, never again to wound me with offers of money."

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## IX.

THE road leading to the Pyramids is shaded at various places by tall mimosas and follows the Nile's banks, which here and there are dotted with palm forests and gray villages. On one side lies the Hassouan desert, behind ascend Cairo's graceful minarets, and in the hazy perspective ahead the awe-inspiring outlines of the mighty Pharaoh's tombs are solemnly sketched upon a sublime canvas of opal stretched over the horizon.

As Phœbus descends beyond the Mokattam hills, the skies invest an aspect of unspeakable glory, and the soul successively receives impressions of surprise, admiration, beatitude. From deep red the coloring imperceptibly modulates to a transparent golden yellow and melts into a subdued violet hue; then the whole background swiftly becomes a boundless

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canopy of deep blue spangled with diamonds of amazing purity. The contemplation at twilight of this tropical firmament with its billions of stars, suns, planets, comets, meteors, aerolites—visible atoms of invisible infinitude! —with its sextillions of worlds scattered by the All-creating Hand into limitless space and time, yet, vibrating eternally with perfect harmony, would make an atheist prostrate himself into the dust, confessing that such heavens proclaim God's majesty!

Upon the sharp rib of the mountains surrounding the Beneficent River, flitting shadows of camels, dogs, and Mussulmans move to and fro as in a magic lantern; and, as if the phantasmagoria were not lively enough, two riders, following the water's edge, advance swiftly toward El-Gizeh—the good station—a village which gave its name to the tallest pyramid, chief monument of ancient Memphis. A large white woolen cloak that nearly reaches the ground, and two piercing black eyes crowned with a bright red fez partly

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hidden by a many-tasseled and multicolored silken *kuffiyeh*, can be seen over the first pony; upon the other sits a young man in top boots, riding trowsers, flannel shirt, and Scotch cap. The luggage of these travelers is tied to the saddle under the wide *burnous* of the first horseman, and consists solely of some sharpened pencils, a pad of writing paper, and a portable lamp.

The women of a Bedouin's family are never the theme of conversation among men unrelated, everything pertaining to them being sedulously kept, particularly from Europeans. Saïd, the rider in white, could not resist the desire to depart from this time-honored usage, so fearful was he that his sister's hope and his own sacrifice might be in vain. His stratagem was to secure the gratitude, and as a consequence, the friendship, of this Frenchman. "After that," believed he, "it will be very easy to influence him in Zuleika's behalf. She is so beautiful that my task will be made quite simple, and eventually this Christian

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shall become my brother-in-law. May Allah forgive!"

As the evening wore on, faith in the practicalness of his scheme diminished.

"Suppose," thought he, "this man has found nothing attractive in my sister: how on earth can any amount of regard for me cause him to care for her! I ought not to waste my energies any farther in this hypocritical conduct. I must find out at once what he thinks of Zuleika."

Carefully as a snail that thrusts out its antennæ, after having withdrawn them at the touch of some disagreeable object, he broke the long silence with: "What do you think of our music?"

"I prefer not to express my opinion about your music, Saïd. Were I in my own country where I could speak freely of women, I might have much to say concerning one of your singers."

"Go ahead, *khawageh*. You are so considerate of our customs and people that I

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almost feel as if you were a member of my own family."

Eugène hesitated to foster intimate relations with a servant, however worthy. He knew that disinterested friendship was rare everywhere, and particularly in the East. Cupidity seemed to lurk from behind all protestations of disinterestedness. Mercenary designs had been so craftily devised by knights of the carpet he had met that, notwithstanding Saïd's rejection of money, he remained as unconvinced as puzzled about his dragoman's motives. At the same time, feeling quite certain that much latitude would be allowed his profane views, and knowing full well that he was able to take care of himself should the Arab become too familiar, he remarked:

"Your melodies are too monotonous, and your instruments too primitive to please my ear; yet, I do not recollect having been moved more deeply than by your sister's song. I have heard that voice unceasingly since I left your house." Spurring the horse to his com-

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panion's side, he looked inquiringly into his glowing eyes—the windows of the soul—and, in a voice full of sincere fervor, while a happy smile hovered about his mouth, he pursued: "If there is any truth in telepathy, she is singing to me at this very instant. Do you not hear, 'Come, come, my beloved!' '*Hôi, hôi, yâ hâbibi!*' Wait, friend, listen!" A jerk upon the reins brought both horses to a dead stop. "Do you not distinguish sobs too? Why should she be crying, tell me, Saïd?"

The sturdy son of the desert stood petrified. His parched throat could not utter a sound. No tear was in his eye: does the volcano send forth water? Blood thick and hot flowed down the left side of his chin from the lip he locked in his glistening teeth. Humiliation, love and pity for his sister, and the ignoble plan to win for her the regard of a Christian whom he hated with the accumulated hatred of all his Mohammedan ancestors, had caused this violent reaction of his subdued spirit.

It is a paradox, nevertheless it is true, that

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in every life enter fears that a cherished hope be realized. We are so vacillating, so capricious, so inconsistent that we may gladly tear down to-day what we joyfully built yesterday. Saïd at this juncture felt like strangling this *kamzir*, this unsavory beast, because he was interested in Zuleika: the very thing, only a minute ago, he had desired most. In spite of this murderous impulse, his sister's will impelled him to obey her to the bitter end.

They were now in sight of the ruins of Memphis, and the grandeur of the scene they beheld gave the guide an opportunity to turn the current of his thoughts, thus mollifying his hateful feelings.

"We are approaching the city of the dead, where stands the oldest building erected by the hand of man," observed he, pointing southward. "Look yonder! On the edge of the Libyan desert, with its feet bathing in the waters of the King of Rivers, rises the largest earthly monument—the stupendous pyramid, tomb of the Pharaoh Khufu, also known as

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Cheops. Think of his mighty work! One hundred thousand men relieved every three months by another hundred thousand toiled thirty consecutive years to complete this fabulous mausoleum. The first ten years were spent merely to make a road for the carrying of those immense blocks which have stood piled on one another four hundred and twenty-five feet during these six thousand years. The construction of the pyramid took the remaining twenty years. Each of the sides of this mammoth measures eight hundred and twenty feet, and its four sides face precisely the four points of the compass. Every stone is thirty feet long or over and carefully polished and jointed. Cheops, the vicious warrior king, shall ever be known as the greatest builder. Though potentates yet unborn may construct another structure of monstrous dimensions like this which at present holds the records of the babyhood of humanity, no contemporaneous or future ingenuity and skill will build chambers and halls that, through centuries, notwith-

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standing the millions of tons pressing over their ceilings, shall preserve perfect regularity. No architect can again rear an edifice that for thousands of years shall endure against our sun's fires, the Nile's inundations, the Sahara's typhoons, the ever-drifting sands, and, most destructive of all—the vindictiveness of man!"

A southern night in its splendor and silence covers this sublime scene of Nature and art. As the travelers dismount to tie their animals, the moon's rays spread a silvery mantle over a colossal image of granite with a human head and breast, and the body of a reclining lion. It is the Sphinx, a hybrid, mythological creation of ancient craft. Woe to him who fails to solve the riddles which, tradition says, this monster propounds to mortals!

"You may think me unbalanced, *khawageh*, yet I have never been more lucid than to-night. I tell you this fearing you may doubt my sanity after hearing what I am going to say. The fact is, I must hypnotize myself before being able to find the entrance to the hall.

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Not alone ought I to be in a trance to discover the door, I must also remain in that condition in order to understand the marks on the walls. In his objective state man is never inspired, and I need much inspiration indeed to succeed in this undertaking.''

''Instead of thinking you of unsound mind, I have now more faith than ever in your ability to do what you expect,'' retorts Eugène, filled with admiration for this *fin-de-siècle* Arab.

Parisians are prone to believe that, beyond their city's fortifications, new sciences are unknown. While this one was aware that hypnotism is only a modern name for an old fact, having familiarized himself with its history antedating Mesmer, and the epoch when kings cured goiter by the laying of hands, he also knew that the more important and complex manifestations of this mysterious force had resulted from tests made recently in his own country. Therefore, great was his astonishment to find an Egyptian, a barbarian one might say, conversant with the latest and most

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interesting scientific theories; and, from that moment, his esteem of Saïd grew. Eugène had studied this psychic phenomenon in many of its phases, and quite a number of his experiments in suggestive therapeutics, spiritism, telepathy, somnambulism, clairvoyance, mind-reading and other ramifications of hypnotism had succeded beyond the expectations of crack-brained enthusiasts, and in spite of the skepticism of "know-it-all" persons. Among medical men he was regarded as an operator peculiarly gifted to induce hypnosis. Upon various occasions he had placed patients in a state of insensibility to pain for the operations of a well-known surgeon, one of his friends; and this musician's influence, electricity, magnetism, or whatever appellation a stickler for names might wish to give to his uncanny faculty, proved more efficacious than ether.

It is not necessary that volition be exerted on the part either of hypnotist or subject in order to inject this most deadly or curative drug.

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Who knows but this occult compound was that which enthralled Zuleika, although he had not sought to intoxicate her?

Who can prove that love is not hypnotism?

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X.

"I WONDER, Saïd, why some Egyptian ruler has not discovered the place we are about to visit. If I remember correctly, I read somewhere that serious and thorough searches had been instituted."

"They have been, *khawageh*, and much was unearthed; not everything, however. May I give you a bit of history showing exactly how far other investigators have gone?"

"Do."

"From many centuries before the Christian era to our day, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and others, hoping to find treasures, from time to time penetrated new passages and chambers within the Great Pyramid. The Khalif Mâmûn, two thousand and six hundred years ago, caused an entrance to be made. His workmen, afterreaching a considerable depth,

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found a vessel containing, strangely enough, exactly the sum expended in the exploration. A marble slab was also discovered, bearing the information that the money sufficed for the work undertaken by the curious monarch; it also added that he would spend a larger sum in vain, if he attempted to penetrate farther. Fabulous legends tell of statues of gold set with rare jewels, of amulets, talismans, and mummies which were found in a golden box placed in a stone sarcophagus, but there are no authentic proofs of this. To-day, nothing of value is known to exist under those rugged blocks. The modern visitor may enter the several chambers, among which, the one named The Great Hall, is the handsomest. There he can verify the astounding fact that neither a needle nor even a hair can be inserted into the joints of these polished fine-grained Mokattam stones, so skillfully are they placed together—an unsurpassable marvel of masonry. The explorer will then proceed to the King's Chamber, the floor of which stands one hundred and

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thirty-nine feet and a half above the plateau holding the pyramid. If he is inquisitive, and expects to see jeweled caskets, ancient works of art, and other paraphernalia interesting to archæologist or ethnologist, he must be disappointed on entering this room which contains only a mutilated and lidless granite coffin without any inscription. Owing to the enormous weight of the mass above, the prudent architect relieved the ceiling of a dangerous pressure by constructing five small chambers above this room. These may be reached from the Great Hall, though with much difficulty. They hold but a few hieroglyphics of small import. The only other rooms known are the Queen's Chamber, located below the King's, and a subterranean room which is reached by following a passage leading downward in a straight line two hundred and ninety-three feet long. From this chamber there is a horizontal tunnel running some distance, which, according to all Egyptologists, leads *nowhere*. There lies their error, for there is the missing

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link completing the chain of Cheop's hitherto mysterious purpose, which was to make the pyramid not alone his mausoleum, but also the receptacle of his nation's archives. And from that intersected passage which according to everyone leads nowhere, we shall go on until reaching the wonderful spot."

Saïd who had placed himself in a somnambulistic condition by gazing fixedly at the lantern for twenty minutes, was now dragging Eugène by the arm out of the underground chamber into the tunnel supposed without exit. After crawling and clambering for several minutes through this uncomfortable labyrinth which, at places, is not over three feet high and four wide, they suddenly halt. The stones around them are covered with slime, and the close air strongly smells of rats, toads, and bats.

The Frenchman, half-asphyxiated, unable to proceed, stops exhausted and on the verge of fainting. His guide, on the contrary, moves with extraordinary energy and urges him on.

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One of the many inexplicable physiological phenomena of hypnotism is that in some somnambulistic states neither bacteria nor noxious gases produce deleterious effects. The subject may be wounded with a poisoned instrument or breathe ammonia, illuminating gas, and various disease-breeding substances, yet feel no harmful results. This accounts for the disability of one of these men, while the other retained his full physical powers.

Happily the dragoman's calculations were correct. Had not the huge trap door of bronze responded at that moment to his pressure, letting in a gust of pure cold air, his employer would not have survived many more inhalations in that fetid atmosphere.

Still dazed, Eugène found himself in a large square hall. The south wall was one big monolith of porphyry, the north of alabaster, the west of crystal, and the east of black marble. The ornamentation was exceedingly rich. Metal reliefs of dazzling colors, contrasting strongly with the tone of their background,

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literally covered the walls. By the dim light of their lantern it was impossible to get a complete effect of this astonishing scene, but the sense of sight was more than compensated for this loss in the contemplation of details. The filigree work in stone and metal resembled a piece of old point lace, and its novel, startling, bewildering tints fascinated the vision with their transcendental harmony. An æsthetic beholder would have concluded that this discovery added more to the plastic and pictorial arts than to the annals of man, even had he understood the wondrous meaning of these amazing designs.

"Do you feel sufficiently strong, *khawageh*, to begin recording what I am about to translate?"

"Positively. Since breathing better air I feel revived. I must warn you that I am unacquainted with stenography, therefore, have the goodness to speak slowly or else I may miss valuable notes."

"Have no fear. It is difficult enough to

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read this at a moderate speed, and I trust you will not be impatient if I linger too long upon figures which may puzzle me. I would rather be slow, yes, silent, than conjectural: the absence of facts makes a more correct history than the invention of them."

And directing his light upon the angle made by the south and west walls, he began.

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## XI.

### "THE REMOTEST ANCESTORS OF MENES.

"THE Rhonnou race settled upon the banks of the Nile one hundred centuries before the birth of Ménès, first king of the first Egyptian dynasty. The Pharaoh Ménès is a direct descendant of Klanrahd, the Liberator of this nation.

"The Rhonnou walked on air and water. Without mechanical aids, they heard and saw beyond the seas. Their homes were warmed by pipes sunk fifteen thousand feet into the earth's crust, thus drawing its central heat. Through the suction of the enveloping ether over any point upon this sublunary sphere, they thwarted the law of gravitation and lifted heavy bodies to any height; with this same principle applied horizontally they transported these weights instantaneously over vast areas.

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"Gold was not utilized, being too soft for the useful arts; nor were rare stones considered of value. The people placed upon the body only seasonable cloths. Precious metals and gems were cast aside, if they could not be fruitfully employed.

"Through a highly developed sense of smell, concerts of perfumes were appreciated. The sensitiveness and culture of the Rhonnou enabled them to receive sound-sensations with ears hermetically closed, for they could apprehend the vibrations of the air through the optic nerve; and with eyes also shut, they enjoyed accents and musical tones merely by the sense of touch.

"An equal amount of food and clothing was allotted to each inhabitant. No money existed. Wise economy was a civic virtue, making it praiseworthy to return large portions of one's unused State allowance.

"Only the gifted few were entitled to a higher education, and this was mainly moral and ethical, because material ends were re-

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garded as secondary in the training of virtuous citizens. It was thought that the schooling of the masses in superior knowledge would prevent them from being able to satisfy their most pressing needs, thereby causing discontent of mind and discomfort of body, eventually leading men to destroy the life and property of their neighbors through jealousy, hatred, and envy. No amount of instruction might spare the miner from living under the ground, the sailor from floating over the watery expanse, or the ploughman from laboring the fields. The leading aim of teachers was to inculcate in each inhabitant self-respect, the respect of others, the veneration of parents, and the love of work.

"Woman was forbidden abstruse studies because they made her less fit to bear and nourish healthy children. When with child, she was almost deified; under these circumstances, the State, regarding maternity as the noblest function, did everything for her well-being.

"If women outnumbered men polygamy was

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considered good, morally and physiologically; when the stronger sex preponderated, polyandry ruled; if the sexes were equally divided, statutes enforced monogamy. There were no celibates, except the deformed, criminal, diseased, and those mentally, morally, or physically feeble whom the State then asexualized to avert unborn misery.

"Suicide was recommended in the case of incurable disease or inconsolable grief. The right to terminate life when pain could not be alleviated, was granted the physician.

"The Rhonnou severed the marriage tie at will; the daughters going with the mother, the sons with the father. It was incumbent upon the divorced to remarry within a year, under the penalty of imprisonment, which, in such instances, lasted until the State could arrange another union.

"Sympathy was extended to all human beings regardless of race or opinions. This people condemned patriotism as an unwise and selfish love of one's native land, causing blood-

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shed between nations. They believed patriotism engendered pride, arrogance, and combativeness, and that, through overweening confidence in their military power, races might plunge into sanguinary conflicts and ultimately disappear. War was called a wholesale murder sanctioned by Fatherland. The Rhonnou were certain that beneath the hatred of peoples, beneath the interests, the jealousies, and the cruelty that may crush empires, there was a peaceful commonwealth universal, all-embracing, and grander than all—the republic of altruism.

"These dwellers along the bountiful Nile did not think exile was an evil. They had enjoyed the change to these fertile banks from the arid plateaus of Asia overlooking the Euphrates, the cradle of their race, and they successfully founded distant colonies. 'Man,' they used to tell, 'is not a tree imbedded in one garden; he can thrive in many gardens and under many skies.'

"There were no priests nor religious dog-

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mas. An intuitive morality guided all. The motive to a noble action was conscience inspired by the love for others. These altruists had no god to reward the right or to punish the wrong. The individual set his whole trust upon himself. When he rode alone through desert and forest or sailed the shoreless oceans, he commanded his soul to himself not to fetich or saint. This egoism expanded to great sacrifices for friends, family, and country. To a Rhonnou, Nature was a book half-understood or misunderstood, yet whose pages were open to all.

"Opinion as to the conduct of public affairs was not divided. Political factions were known only theoretically, and were deprecated. Some of the popular notions regarding political parties were: A party is an arm invented to injure one's enemies; a party leader can never be entirely honest; partisans think they are actors, but they are simply acted upon; to the other faction, a citizen is always a traitor; partisans lie so often that they

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finally believe themselves, the only ones who escape the self-delusion being their intellectual leaders, originators of the falsehoods; a party divides family and commonwealth; it crushes honesty because truth is a party's worst opponent; when a party cannot bribe it defames; all wars result from political parties."

With this sentence Saïd reached the end of the west wall.

"I believe," said he, "we shall find that each wall is like a chapter in a book. Sure enough! Here begins the next wall with an epoch distinct from the preceding. Are you ready?"

"Go ahead!"

"THE HIERARCHY OF PRELATES.

"Seventy-four centuries before Ménès ascends the throne, the Rhonnou libraries were yet far-famed, and the nation known as the wisest. Kings and *savants* came from the antipodes for universal wisdom.

"At this period the people began to have a

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religion, and to burn incense before wooden images of gods, each representing an evil.

"The pilgrims who knelt at the shrine of the Father of Gods in the Temple of Temples offered in sacrifice, original works of art, new systems of philosophy, and recent inventions. These, snatched by geniuses from the realms of matter or of spirit, were destroyed to propitiate the gods. This form of offering was the highest proof of devotion inventive men could give.

"These people were as ever thrifty and honest: their instincts led them to do good and to search the truth. Why, then, should they need to propitiate the gods? Because, according to the clergy, goodness and toleration were detested by their deities. Cunning, indolence, and unmentionable sins were encouraged, and schools of vice established by 'divine command,' as the priests said. Through a long line of virtuous progenitors the Rhonnou were impelled to obey benevolent propen-

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sities, and they often digressed from the criminal paths traced by their religion.

"Ecclesiastical laws forced the hereditary rulers to make vows of poverty, which resulted in placing the governmental reins in the hands of the clergy. When these came to power they put into use the inventions which were supposed to have been annihilated by them in the secret sacrificial chapel.

"Purely intellectual forces now no longer sufficed to sway men, and by playing upon their emotions, the prelates grew in might and riches. The sentiment of fear was skillfully used; through threat of everlasting punishment in the next life, they held the people in absolute subjugation. The priests claimed to be representatives of the gods, and the divinely appointed guardians of the public weal. They pretended to have received mandates direct from heaven in the form of golden tablets upon which were inscribed the laws; these records were zealously hidden from profane eyes."

"It is wonderful how history repeats itself!"

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exclaimed Eugène. "The success of the founders of a religion is always due to the hysterical element in man: a divine vision is but a pathological state. From time immemorial stupid humanity has been swayed by epileptics, geniuses, and prophets." Here he paused and bit his lip, suddenly remembering Mohammed's peculiarities; luckily Saïd had not heard as he was almost blinded by a violent headache, and thought only of finishing his task. Noting an expression of pain in the guide's countenance, which he attributed to his interruption, the Frenchman pursued: "You'll pardon these reflections, won't you? You cannot imagine how many times I have felt like expressing the thoughts your fascinating narrative awakens."

"Do not hesitate to interrupt me whenever you wish," responded the dragoman, who thereupon resumed his translation:

"With their delusive hopes and fears of a future existence, and their priests' preaching of the present's worthlessness, the Rhonnou,

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hitherto a contented people, became wretched. Suffering augmented and created an artificial need of another life that promised to be better.

"The instinct of egoism was thoroughly taken advantage of by the clergy; but they overshot the mark in their endeavor to enslave man through the free exercise of his vilest passions. At this stage the nation touched the lowest depth. Crimes were lauded and rewards offered for excesses in them. Sanguinary combats between man and beasts became ritual forms. The sexes lived apart, deaths outnumbered births, and the race was rushing to its extinction."

With this last word ended the north wall, but the guide proceeded without resting:

"THE LIBERATOR.

"Fifty-one centuries before Ménès ascends the throne, Klanrahd, the Liberator, appears.

"The main event is the peaceful revolution through which this noble character, unsullied by his time, brings back his people into the ways of righteousness: from polytheism to the

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high empyrean of pure reason, from the dread of idols to the love of men.

"The final hypothesis of his creed was that the First Cause is Unknowable, and, irreconcilable as it may seem, while he propounded the doctrine of agnosticism, he spoke of the spiritual and physical manifestations of the Hakmah—a collective term for soul, spirit, mind, and brain.

"Klanrahd had been begotten in bondage; he was lame, short of stature, slight of frame, and his features were irregular and bizarre: they would have repelled, except for the nobility of his brow, the kindliness of his smile, and the meekness of his demeanor. In the beginning, he was ridiculed, caricatured, and persecuted; later, the unflinching adherence to his principles under repeated tortures won him the admiration of all.

"His healing power was infallible. The sick in body or mind flocked to him from distant parts. Incurables approached, their supplicating arms extended, and by laying his hands

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on each, he sent them forth cured and rejoicing.

"The Liberator was the embodiment of unselfishness, and never accepted fees or honors. He dwelled in the cave of a rocky hill. A tunic of coarse hemp, a copper dish, and a wooden spoon, were his sole possessions. He ate only vegetables; these, unasked for, were placed in his metal vessel by grateful patients. Once in a while he passed several consecutive days without food, if it was not brought to him, because he never complained nor begged.

"Leisure hours had come to the Rhonnou through practical inventions and discoveries applied over their vast and fertile territories, and by the storing of their immense and superfluous crops. The people grew indolent, luxurious, heartless: their soul was dead.

"In the Temple of Temples he usually began his daily oration by saying: 'You fill your palaces with gold while you starve your Hakmah!'

"Klanrahd's example in resisting the master

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temptation of his day—material gain—was potent; it mollified the avaricious spirit of his nation. His whole existence was a silent, though sublime and potent, revolt against gross materialism.

"The Liberator's humility, generosity, and particularly his healing power, ultimately made him the object of a popular regard bordering upon idolatry. His great honesty and eloquence alone prevented the nation from worshipping him as a god. 'I am a plain man like you,' would he preach. 'My origin is lowlier than that of any one here, and the worms in an eternal night await me yonder. I am not better than the most despised and despicable. If I do good it is in obedience to an inexplicable impulse. My will is not more free to make me do wrong than is the will of a sinner free to make him do right. My acts are unconscious, they result from birth or suggestion. If the Hakmah impels me to virtuous action, let me thank its Good Maker. How could I claim credit for faculties which,

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though beneficent, are not of my own making?'

"With consistency he demonstrated that the evil thoughts and deeds—not the original sins—of parents cursed their children. Klanrahd was convinced that through generations of virtuous lives and the proper training of descendants, a steady advance would be made toward philosophy and beatitude until finally the highest plane would be reached by the human family upon the wings of the Hakmah. An impressive exhortation to charity always closed his sermon. His precepts, with the powerful example of a life of abnegation, influenced the Rhonnou and made them once again wise and philanthropic."

The east wall was finished, but Saïd could not go on. His head hung limp upon the breast, and he stood mute, with parched lips and burning throat. His temples throbbed as if about to split. He looked around aimlessly, and just as Eugène thought he was going to read the next wall, the Arab fell swooning in.

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his arms, a helpless prey to a fever that, for several days, had been insidiously consuming him.

"Great heavens, Saïd! what is the matter? Let us get out quickly," the Frenchman shouted. Although appehending some serious trouble, he was too startled and shocked to note the maniacal gleams in his dragoman's eyes, which a practised alienist would have interpreted as symptomatic of a terrible mental disorder.

Was it fatigue the result of ten hours of close attention that had unnerved the hardy Bedouin? Was it hysteria induced by hypnosis? Might not his superexcited state be due to the recital of the thrilling Rhonnou annals? No; not one of these was the cause of his collapse. His condition resulted from the conflicting emotions that seared his heart since Zuleika's avowal. The illness had stealthily increased through days and nights of ceaseless perturbation, during which, with clinched jaws and threatening fists he hurled anathemas upon

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that foul Christian's head while cursing his own weakness which made him the tool of a foolish sister when, instead of this, he "ought to be eating the heart of that cur!"

Five or six minutes elapsed before the guide could speak; meanwhile, he remained rigid and cold in his employer's arms. Then, rolling his eyeballs and swaying his head like a caged tiger, he mumbled:

"What has happened? Why do you stare at me thus, and why your arms around me?"

"My dear fellow, you were about to sink to the floor as you ended Klanrahd's oration, and I caught you barely in time. We had better not begin the remaining wall to-day."

"Oh, yes! I must finish now for all time," blurted out Saïd. "Of course, I am dizzy and very, oh! very tired. I feel nauseated, too; but I shall end my task now were I to do it alone and die in the attempt. Do you hear? Were I to die in the attempt!"

He then deciphered from the south wall:

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"THE CURSE OF THE GODS.

"Four centuries before Ménès ascends the throne, from miles around could be seen the stupendous statue of Klanrahd rising three hundred feet which the Rhonnou, in their gratitude, had erected to the memory of their Liberator. A report has it that when his spirit left its decaying abode, the gods watching over the destiny of this race petrified the remains and augmented them to this fabulous size. That fable was woven by the priests who were gradually returning to power. The clergy hated the name of this good philosopher, but the remembrance of him was dear to the people. The position of these prelates being, as yet, insufficiently firm to enable them to overthrow this popular idol, they craftily praised Klanrahd's achievements, pretended to be his acolytes, and claimed to have built his statue. In reality, they were doing their utmost to counteract the benign influence of his teachings.

"A notion prevailed to the effect that so long as this stony image stood, the nation would

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prosper. 'Woe to us!' believed the Rhonnou, 'if Klanrahd ever falls!' For this apprehension there existed two reasons; the first was that, in its fall, the statue would crush the costly Temple of Temples whose dome touched the palm of the monstrous hand uplifted in the act of blessing it; the other, was on account of the belief that such a calamity would prophesy an unheard-of general cataclysm.

"Manrmhud, the capital of the Rhonnou, was an immense city spreading many leagues over both banks of the river. In the west, it extended as far as the marshy lands* that divide the north and south seas. In this metropolis the hundred mightiest citizens, one half of whom were bishops, dwelled in palaces of tremendous dimensions surmounted by hanging gardens vast and beautiful, that sent to the zenith an unbroken cloud of incense from the fragrant perfume of rose, citron, lilac, orange, magnolia, and jessamine blossoms. Baths of fabulous size shaded by majestic

* The Suez Canal.

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eucalyptuses and decorated with frescoes, reliefs, and intaglios of mysterious symbolism, characterized these sumptuous habitations, to which were annexed pyramids of vertiginous height holding ancestral remains. Stupendous private temples for the worship of each family, were approached by long avenues of colossal owls of granite and porphyry that led to their alabaster peristyle containing forests of marble columns, one more precious than the other, and myriads of statues of inconceivable workmanship. Upon the monolithic door-posts garlands of flowers and features of mythological beings were chiseled with inexpressible skill.

"The remainder of the population, amounting to nearly ten million souls, lived in mud huts.

"In this era, in spite of the Liberator's moral precepts, the horrible practices of a former cruel epoch were resumed, and, under ecclesiastical domination, national degeneration once more set in.

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"The Temple of Temples stood upon a round terrace half a mile in diameter. The exterior of its dome inlaid with gold and enamel, seemed to challenge the skies in brilliancy, so glorious, so resplendent was the reflection of the sunbeams as they fell upon the bright surface. One night the huge statue swayed to and fro for a few seconds, and then solemnly toppled over head foremost upon this sublime cathedral, carrying everything in the way of its awful descent. Some of the fragments of the mammoth image, found miles away deeply imbedded in the soil, are the only vestiges of its departed grandeur.

"Klanrahd's statue had been erected according to perfect laws of construction, and there had been no earth disturbance; therefore, the way in which it dropped could not be attributed to the mistake of builders, nor to the unconscious elements. Whence, then, came that propelling force and the destructive design originating it? Was it from priests, from God, from the inert mass itself? These three

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hypotheses were taken into account, yet, to this day, nobody has solved the enigma; and it is no wonder, for, without further evidence, it were equally logical to infer that any one of the three is the correct supposition."

At this juncture Saïd's legs relaxed as wax under the influence of heat, and he crouched in a heap upon the marble floor.

"Don't help me up, *khawageh*," whispered he, in a faint and singular voice. "Let me lie here a moment. All I need is a little rest, and then I'll be able to finish."

Eugène spread the burnous on the pavement and his dragoman stretched himself upon it. From hunger, fatigue, and overexcitation the Frenchman also was unstrung, and felt anxious to get out of that chamber which was beginning to invest a fantastical aspect in his fagged-out brain. Knowing, however, that the Arab would die rather than leave his translation unfinished, Eugène resignedly sat down upon the floor to await the return of his guide's strength.

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"I don't understand, under the circumstances, how it would be possible for that statue to fall in such a peculiar way, unless man or Allah had a hand in it," remarked Saïd. "How could a destructive motive reside in an inert mass of stones? That seems a preposterous view. I am unable to comprehend. Can you conceive of such a possibility?"

"I can. I am not sure to prove anything, but I may offer my own answer to this seemingly absurd question, although, I am frank to confess, no phenomenon of such a character has ever come within the course either of my reading or of my experience." He slowly repeated the dragoman's query, "How could a destructive motive reside in an inert mass of stones?" scratched his head to call forth ideas, and began: "In the first place, allow me to say that, though a fact may not be within my consciousness, its absence does not prove its nonexistence, does it? I believe everything is possible. The blind man calls the sun dark: does his blindness disprove its light? After

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all, inertia cannot demonstrate death any more than motion proves life. Why may not there be vitality in immobility? In the final inventory of my reading, I throw aside all the books, all save that of mathematics; the others are incomplete and generally misleading. What do scientists of an epoch possess that those of another century may not call worthless? Exceedingly little indeed, if the philosophy of history teaches anything. I certainly do not claim to know more than others: my sole real knowledge is that I am ignorant. I know I do not know, and that, by the way, is a greater sum of learning than some scientists ever attain, for they are too vain ever to see their own limitations. Of course, you are thinking I am digressing just now, talking at random, and so forth. Well, if so, you are mistaken. I can assure you I have never thought more coherently, more lucidly than at this instant. The hypothesis I am going to advance is so odd, however, that I wanted to claim a well-grounded right to my opinion,

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though it be at variance with all science, and though it be based upon no precedent."

Having warmed up to his subject to the extent of being wholly absorbed by it, Eugène went on without observing that the dragoman had fallen asleep:

"Who knows the occult power and motives of molecular forces? The tortuous brooklet gurgling through the dale, the mountain peaks struggling to pierce the sky, and the azure firmament itself turning to a flat black speak alike to poet and philosopher of dynamic, preordained impulses. Time, space, matter, and motion are naught without the mind—that is everything and everywhere. Mankind, from time unrecorded, have accepted the notion of life in incorporeal, intangible things—in disembodied spirits. Is it not as reasonable to believe a mind might find a habitation in inert matter, since it may exist in empty space, in nothing? When a huge rock leaves the mountain side and in its furious run destroys a hamlet and its inhabitants more

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effectively than the bloodthirsty tyrant who descends with his cohorts, this certainly is not a conclusive proof that the stone is animated. Yet, let me ask you: Is not the result of its mad course apparently planned by an infernal spirit? Though a monolith may have been lifeless during the millions of years it stood motionless as an integral part of the hillside, and until the very moment it broke its cyclopean moorings, am I illogical if I suppose that now it may be endowed with an individual soul? It no doubt has the palpable attributes of life—time, space, matter, and motion. Why, then, might it not contain a spark of the universal, all-permeating mind? Man's narrow insight has invented the word 'inanimate' just as it has created objective heavens and hells, angels, griffins, virgin-mothers, satyrs, devils, and ghosts; but, in reality, these are but delusions, illusions, or hallucinations, and they exist only subjectively. No, my dear Saïd, there is no death: annihilation is but a transitory state, and so is immobility. Back of

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all inertia there must be life; behind all death, motion. An idea may dwell in the infinitesimal atom. If the microbe kills a czar, why may not a molecule have willfully knocked down Klanrahd's gigantic statue?"

Noticing that the Arab was dozing, he nevertheless continued his ruminations aloud to keep himself awake, as he was feeling extremely drowsy:

"Why should causes be hidden from man? Is he doomed everlastingly to cry in vain, 'Why, whence, whither?' I suppose so. It is perhaps decreed above that a mortal shall not read the holy scroll of Nature's secret lore; that, farther than the forward foot, he must not foresee his narrow earthly path; and that, upon the inky waves of his shoreless Beyond, neither sail nor beacon shall surge forth to guide him. If so, let it be! After all, it is best to content one's self with darkness, while hoping for light, and remaining fearless of everything, everything except Ego—that most dangerous enemy!"

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The soothing waters of sleep were gradually submerging the domain of his thoughts, and, as happens when we approach Slumberland, ideas grew incoherent and confused. He now lisped:

"Thou art here, Zuleika, though far away. Every object centers in me, all things are subjective: the universe, 't is my brain, and there art thou enthroned, my queen! In my futile attempts to find the truth, what precious hours of this span-long life I do lose! Wisdom is misery: it were better to be a happy fool than a sad sage, though I be the wisest. Silly weakling that thou art to postpone the carnal delights, though only for one hour! To what purpose? For more erudition? Have I not the greatest, an unrelenting, conviction that I am an ass? Yet, in spite of this light, human inconsistency lures me over and over into denser asininities through the glimmer of will-o'-the-wisp cogitations that make me forget the knowledge of my stupidity—my sole intellectual harbor!"

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The erratic monologue is brusquely stopped here by an unearthly shriek from the dragoman, who points to the south wall, trembling, horrified, hiding his face as if he beheld a hellish apparition. His somnambulistic trance is over. "Yes, that's it! Put it down on your pad, quick, quick!" he spasmodically shouts, then slowly enunciates as if reading from the reliefs and carvings in the wall: "In vain shalt thou seek farther. Cursed be—"

He repeats these words, the while pounding his forehead to accelerate the mental process; immediately afterward he howls at the top of his voice: "Put this down! It's inscribed there! Don't you see it? Don't you feel the heat from these letters of fire saying, 'Cursed be the translator? Oh! filthy hound! Why hast thou stirred the embers of the past? How darest thou tear the veil of eternal oblivion! Canst thou help man by thy prattle? Vermin! The power of speech shall be snatched from thee and thy carcass flung to the desert's jackals!"

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## XII.

EUGENE, more dead than alive, dragged his terrified companion out of the pyramid without learning whether these last phrases were on the wall or solely in the diseased imagination of his guide.

It is noon. The fiery orb in the zenith drops molten lead over two phantom-like riders creeping silently along the sandy road to Cairo.

Saïd had awakened from his hypnotic state with an ominous premonitory feeling of great depression. After reaching the city he passed into a condition of stupor; later, acute delirium grew to a maximum of intensity. His head became hot, his eyes wild, his skin moist, and whitish saliva overran his mouth. He expectorated incessantly while uttering ear-splitting cries, exhibiting symptoms suggestive of hydrophobia. In the hospital, where he was

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manacled, his acute mania turned into a chronic state; his excitement moderated, and the delusive ideas assumed fixedness and consistency: a sad, sad pathological sign. Two weeks after, he was pronounced harmless, but incurably insane.

The patient was so mild that his physicians allowed him daily to wander about the grounds adjoining the institution. One evening, at supper, they missed him. As he was not dangerous, no serious search was undertaken. It was believed he would return when hungry; he never did, however. The opinion prevails that Saïd fell into the Nile or died of starvation.

Under such melancholy conditions, the idea of benefiting from his guide's historical researches became repugnant to Eugène, who thereupon resolved not to divulge the Rhonnou records.

Zuleika heard of her brother's misfortune through a formal missive the Frenchman sent her. Let it be said to his credit, he had not addressed this girl with an evil intent. Not-

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withstanding his frailty, and his penchant toward her, he held himself in check through pity for her unhappy brother. Once more, as in biblical lore, was woman to be the tempter.

Only men were allowed to visit the patient, and this gave the little flirt an excuse for writing to the *Franzoui* asking him to keep her informed daily about her brother's health. This request upset resolutions that had not been very firm, for he was hardly capable of holding a long siege against his senses.

The Mohammedan girl knew what the strict etiquette of her religion implied, and was also fully aware that writing to a stranger would be regarded as reprehensible even in his own country. She ought to have asked for news through the hospital authorities. Intuition said all this, besides warning her against the possibility of repelling a man by making advances; nevertheless, these thoughts were cast aside by the winds of her passion as are dead leaves by an approaching storm.

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Carmen is right when she sings about Cupid's disdain of law:

> "L'amour est enfant de Boheme,
> Il n'a jamais connu de loi."

After Saïd's case was declared chronic there existed no longer any excuse for the correspondence; in spite of this, it grew more frequent. The Parisian's tone of condolence smoothly drifted to one of admiration, while her grateful phrases donned a coquettish dress. Woman ever needs to lean upon some man, be he real or ideal, and in hours of trial, either sex is impelled to ask for sympathy. In the beginning, an unhappy sister had merely longed to speak of her brother to a consoling friend; to-day, goaded on by his gallantry, the budding woman in Zuleika—an organism that through passionate ancestors had pent-up the energy of an Egyptian sun—needed much more than flattering messages. She now desired to lay her head upon her hero's bosom and breathe there gently; without knowing why, she also felt an irresistible craving to see his eye rever-

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berate the flame that lit her eye, to hear his voice echo the verses in her heart, to feel herself entwined, helpless, suffocated in his muscular arms, and to burn of the fire in the blood of his lips.

The opposite of such a feeling was developing in Eugène, and her image grew dimmer day by day. Solitude might have kept alive his interest in her; his minutes, however, were so well taken up with recreations that, even had he been attached to this young *indigène*, he could not have found much time to think of her. From breakfast to five o'clock tea—golf, lawn tennis, driving, riding, sailing, and shooting; from dinner to bed hours—the opera, the *café*, a musicale at some hotel, and a hop at the English Agency, successively occupied him.

> "Man's love is of man's life a thing apart
> 'Tis woman's whole existence."

Had it not been for her ingenuous communications, the violinist would have forgotten the native songstress before this. Although she reigned supreme in his soul but a fortnight ago, another queen had already dethroned her.

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## XIII.

THE new sovereign was Mabel Wilson, a handsome and cultured English girl of twenty-two. This tall and well-moulded young woman usually wore a natty sailor hat over her mass of brown hair. Tailor-made gowns fitted her voluptuous form like a glove. During the day all her jewelry consisted of two tiny pearls on the man's shirt she wore. The blood of peach blossoms seemed to course under her skin, so rosy, so fresh was her complexion. Although the smile upon her slightly curved lips was somewhat disdainful when she addressed men, they thought it bewitching. In color and limpidity her eyes evoked in the memory the waters of Capri's enchanting grottoes.

Miss Wilson's social status was all that could be wished; her two maternal uncles were in the

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House of Lords, and her yearly income exceeded twenty thousand sterling. This last qualification had attracted Eugène; without it, he would have paid only the usual attentions a distinguished woman inspires. His violin, like the revolving mirror that draws birds to a hunter, had so often brought him girls with physical, mental, and social attributes equaling Mabel's that he might have found nothing extraordinary in this additional acquaintance.

"Five hundred thousand francs a year, and so well endowed otherwise! Eugène, my boy, here is a woman worth cultivating! Should you ever decide to marry, where could you find a better combination?" Reflections of this sort had influenced his behavior toward Miss Wilson, and, at present, he was quite assiduous in his attentions.

After a few conversations with this highly-educated girl, he found still another reason for his interest: for the first time in his career, he had come across a woman he could not read. Unable to guess whether she cared for him,

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he felt both vexed and charmed; at the same time, he became curious to ascertain the result of his machinations to ensnare her. When especially piqued by her indifference and invulnerability, he used to ask himself:

"Why should she not fall in love like the others? I have met her every day during the past month: would she have tolerated this if she did not enjoy my company? With her I danced, drank, and—most dangerous of all!—with her I played Chopin. Yet, there she stands as at the first meeting, simply an agreeable chum. Those English people are unfathomable! If her gaze were not so penetrating and her form so appetizing, I might think there is only a brain in that body!"

Mabel Wilson was the personification of the finer Anglo-Saxon type. Compared to a Latin woman, she might seem undemonstrative and overreserved, lacking in intensity and expression; but the wise physiognomist would soon discover that her cold and dignified exterior was exhibited only to better hide a generous

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and affectionate temperament. A French girl might be more prodigal of sweet-sounding phrases and eloquent gestures; Mabel, however, was less avaricious of unselfish deeds. If the curves and motions of the southerner's form were more æsthetic, the roses on the cheeks and the firm step of the northern maiden indicated gifts far greater: health and strength—blessings peculiarly enjoyed by the English mother who, alone, has contributed more to the greatness of the British Empire than have all its soldiers, financiers, and statesmen.

This young lady had learned to curb the soarings of her heart. It was with regret she saw young friends give unrestrained play to their emotions. More than once had she advised a giddy lass thus:

"Beware, friend! Though I am not pessimistic, I can see the world as it is. My opinion is that the enjoyments of life and love are often but a cruel trap in an alluring garb. Women fall too easily into such spangled nets."

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Few men could look imperturbably into those calm clear eyes and that unctuous face while listening to her mocking lips replying to their platitudes in an ironical, though suave, voice. So excellent a logician was she, and so incisively did her sarcasm cut when occasion required, that, though her discourse was always refined, it disconcerted the numerous flatterers a wealthy girl is bound to encounter. In fact, her repartees had made her unpopular with practically all the men she knew. Virile mentality in a woman is rarely enjoyed by the sterner sex. Although expressed in a soft tone and gentle manner, her wit chilled fortune-hunters. Even among the many worthy admirers who prized her for herself alone, not one had discerned that a fine mind and a broad education were no bar to truly feminine aspirations; and Eugène, like everybody else, had been unable to perceive that this girl's dearest hope was similar to that of her humblest and silliest sister, which is, to love and be loved. The college-bred young woman moderated her

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laughter and tears so well by syllogisms that no one could read beneath the frigid surface. God alone had witnessed the awful inner storms unchained by the repression of her deep feelings.

This Frenchman's analysis of the capricious sex had taught him that Mabel was of an unusual brain caliber, and should be treated accordingly. He, therefore, invariably addressed her as a mental equal. That was the secret of his success in this instance. Had he used condescension and talked upon light themes, as if she were a child—precisely what intellectual men are in the habit of doing with most women—he would not have had the pleasure of her society two consecutive minutes. Their conversation generally embraced serious subjects, and, at times, it waxed quite warm, for she fearlessly expressed her views.

To the query, "What do you think of my nation?" she frankly answered Eugène one afternoon, as they were about to go out horseback riding:

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"Your women are frivolous and your men indelicate, below the varnish of their graceful manners. I do not admire the character of your people. Their modern literature and private and public conduct border too much upon grossness. The absence of impure suggestions in our diction, oral or written, and also in our demeanor, is a proof of the moral superiority of the English."

"Do you base your judgment of a race solely upon a branch of its ethics? Accordingly you might maintain that Athenians and Romans were inferior to Britons."

"I think they were. Achievements, though remarkable, cannot make a race's greatness lasting without a sound ethical foundation. I believe England is the moral paragon of Greece and Rome, and I am certain that she shall fall like them if she ever lower her standards of living to the level of those ancient nations."

"Allow me to observe, my dear Miss Wilson, that appearances as regards peoples may

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deceive, just as they do with individuals. During my short stay in England, it is possible I have drawn erroneous conclusions; whatever be the case, my inference is that there exists much cant and hypocrisy that passes for morality in your country. The Frenchman is a boaster, he exaggerates the evil he does, and sometimes glories in adventures that took place only within his quixotic cranium. Your English chap, on the contrary, keeps mum about actual facts of this character. Oh! he may claim to have 'got beastly drunk,' or to 'have imbibed maw than all the other fellows togethah,' but upon the theme of woman his mouth is sealed. Does this prove higher ethical ideals? Is he not perhaps adding falseness to greater sins?"

"Well, Monsieur Duprez, granting that your premises are correct, you will admit that drinking is a lesser vice. If the Britisher also commits greater wrongs and is ashamed of them instead of loudly advertising them, he is not so contaminating as your coarse *fanfaron*. Bad

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precepts are very censurable, for they may affect the innocent quite as effectively as bad examples. Consider, for instance, the flippancy with which your writers treat the relations of the sexes. Can this be condemned too sternly? In such matters, the severity even of the Puritans, though absurd as everything immoderate is, would conduce to more national well-being than your Gallic license, your *esprit gaulois*. In your books, your plays, your journals, and in your daily discourses you trifle too often with sacred objects. The greater number of your geniuses make it their main business to ridicule religion and marriage—the keystone of every nation! I have misgivings about France's future, especially on account of her irreligious tendency. The State rests upon a spiritual harmony between the government and the people. To be lasting it must be founded, as the English power is, upon a uniform faith and church. The body politic, like the human muddy vesture, when separated from its spirit, decays.

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"I suppose, as a matter of course, you think little of the grand impulse of '93—a civilizing movement that had no religion whatsoever; still, in spite of this, it did more to emancipate humanity by establishing the lofty principle of the Rights of Man, than have done all the other epochs combined."

"Religion beneath the better principles of that revolution would have ennobled it and made its good enduring. Do you not already observe a crumbling away of the higher ideals in those countries that disdain their fathers' faith? Do you not think France is making a social and political blunder in alienating the Roman Catholic Church from her—an organization that lighted Europe for twenty centuries, notwithstanding some bad popes? Black sheep, you know, may be found in the best of flocks."

"The church was not keeping abreast with the advance and aspirations of my nation. Had it ruled to this day its citizens would not

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have their political prerogatives, pre-eminent among which stands the universal suffrage."

"Universal suffrage! A pretty thing that is! Do you really believe the best reforms came through this blessing? I am convinced that the most essential good subjects have derived from governments has almost always come from enlightened and benevolent statesmen and rulers, in a word, from intelligent minorities. I have no faith in the wisdom of the will of the people. *Les foules sont folles!* Universal suffrage is a euphonious phrase, nothing more. It is so well known to be abused and powerless that the better citizens where it prevails ofttimes abstain from voting through disgust and discouragement, convinced as they are of the futility of their efforts against the schemes of politicians. Universal suffrage, when it is allowed free play, hands the power not to the wise, not to the worthy: under the guise of liberty, a nation places a commercial yoke upon its own

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neck for the benefit of a dozen unscrupulous tradesmen."

"According to you, then, an absolute monarchy would be the preferable form of government, and the sovereignty of the people with their parliamentary rights ought not to be granted."

"That is precisely my view. A wise and kindly potentate is better than your political freebooter. You may tell me that a king might be of the freebooter sort. To this I can answer there is less likelihood of a royal ruler being dishonest and unpatriotic than might be the case with irresponsible men untrained to rule. Responsibility and hereditary nobility develop character. A great personal duty rests upon a king: he must answer to his family, to his kingdom, and to the world for all his acts. On the other hand, your *deputé* seldom feels much responsibility beyond that he owes himself of assuring his own re-election. And of that, you may be certain, he takes precious care from the hour he enters

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office. I would compare the members of a parliament to the holders of stock in a corporation. Shareholders never feel remorse, though they may draw extra dividends through the dishonest action of their company's officials. The corporate body has no soul, nor have parliaments. The framers of a legislative act may know that their law is unjust, biased, partisan, yet, gladly extract from it all the personal advantages they can. Wherever there are many heads, Monsieur Duprez, responsibility must be divided, and, consequently, weakened. It is largely on this account that I regard the republican form of government as a failure."

"You are radical indeed in your conservatism, if I may be permitted the paradox. For all that, it seems to me you ought not to allow your enthusiasm about an ideal State to make you forget facts advantageous to my side. Take, for example, the right of discussion in elective assemblies. Has it not more than once produced incalculable good by giving oppor-

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tunities to special geniuses for the elucidation of momentous national questions?''

''Theoretically, yes: in principle, parliaments do seem perfect. What is the actual fact, however? The right of public discussion is mainly used for the aims and interests of the few individuals who participate in it, mostly to gratify their vanity and selfishness. There is little doubt in my mind that those who reach the highest political posts are not your best men. These would be modest and studious while your politician must be the opposite of this to reach his goal. The more arrogant, ambitious, and unscrupulous is he, the quicker he induces his sheepish constituents to give him a rôle in the legislative farce.''

At this juncture a footman announced that the horses were ready, and relieved Eugène of the annoyance to refute additional arguments. He loathed polemics with women, and had entered the arena with this exceptional girl solely to produce a favorable impression upon

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her, not, as she supposed, for mental gratification.

While they galloped toward the Khedive's Palace, it was with satisfaction he noted that Mabel's thoughts became trivial, and their utterance desultory as the rhythm of the Arabian ponies.

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## XIV.

'T is night, the sweet and terrible hour that lends its dark veil to lovers' wooings or to haters' blows. The white rays from above, intercepted by the foliage of palms, trace fanciful shadows upon the yellow paths of the Ezbekieh Gardens. Save an occasional tinkling from a stagnant fountain in the distance, and the faint hollow noise made at rare intervals by a lonely fish gobbling up a drowning fly on the water's surface, the tepid air is still, and all the fauna sleep.

All at once a vapory form appears as if skimming swiftly over the road, like a small sail-yacht over a tranquil sea. As it approaches, a wide silken *habarah* is perceived completely enveloping feminine curves that terminate on the ground in sharply-pointed slippers of red satin. It is an Arabian,

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neither a *fellahin* nor from a bey's harem; she evidently belongs to the merchant class. Her face is hidden from the middle of the nose by a long piece of white gauze which grows narrower as it descends to the hem of her baggy cloak. The lower portion of the forehead and her large flashing eyes, made unnecessarily wider by *kohl*, and shining like fireflies, are the only visible parts of the head. She advances rapidly and noiselessly on tiptoe, feline-like, which motion, seen from afar, causes her white mantle to resemble a boat sailing over the earth. Straight ahead she proceeds while hastily scrutinizing the benches on each side of the roadway, as if looking for some one.

Suddenly she turns to the left, whence a voice in an undertone calls:

"Zuleika!"

According to her peculiar morality, woman views right and wrong; just because she is weak, she may resort to cunning and treachery. Like the slave or the child she prevaricates

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through *naïveté* or necessity. Zuleika argued within herself before resolving to write Eugène to meet her in these gardens. She decided it was unbecoming to see him there; and was ashamed to use the pretext of wishing to ask about her brother's health; yet, this was the only course her light indicated, and she resorted to it to attain her end.

In the bad actions of women, it is nearly always love that prompts: this ennobles her vengeance, or, at least, palliates her crime. When she flings vitriol at the face of her perfidious lover, when she slanders a rival or shoots the faithless father of her children, we may curse her folly, her weakness, her abnormal instinct of self-preservation in the sphere of the sentiments, but we should also pity her for being so violently impelled by feelings that are as natural to this impulsive, child-like sex, as heat is to the sun. Back of her awful act there was the genuine affection wounded to the quick, and the anguish of dark despair may have made her mad.

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If ever the dream of the emancipation of woman become realized, then may she be judged and condemned upon the same bases as man; until that day, her wrongs ought to be weighed in other scales. Most of the purposes of man center upon honors, fortune, power; with woman, it is not thus yet: these are not her sole aims. Having been kept as a plaything or as a beast of burden, according to the sensuality or sordidity of her master, it is no wonder that her ethical principles now and then startle him.

A debilitating environment has lowered the morality of many others besides downtrodden woman. Servile classes of either sex wear on their forehead the brand of their condition. The stigma of a slave is impressed upon the human conscience irrespective of sex. The serfs of Russia, the coolies of the Far East, the Jews of the Orient, and the blacks of countries where the whites rule, having been oppressed for centuries, show foibles that we condemn—we, the very ones who made fawn-

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ing and lying necessary to the preservation of those weaker human species!

Zuleika's morality had been shaped by her surroundings, and the idea of dissimulation mastered her finer sensibilities. The desire to possess her ideal mate had compelled her to resort to a subterfuge, which, in her inexperienced brain, was the only means at hand. The emotion of her soul desiring to unite itself to what it deemed was best, that sentiment of tenderness toward the creature inspiring it, that limitless thirst for mysterious joys, in a word, love! would have made this innocent girl stop at nothing, not even at crime.

"What excuse did you give your servant for leaving the house at this hour?"

"None. She does not know I left it. I stepped out of the window of my room," answered she, almost inaudibly, fearing to be overheard.

"I am sorry we must meet in this clandestine manner. I ought not to have allowed it. There is nothing concerning Saïd that could

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not have been communicated to you by mail. Your solicitude, I fear, was only a trick. Tell me candidly, Zuleika, why did you want to see me?" She looked steadfastly at her pink finger nails without responding. "Won't you tell me?"

This interrogation was unnecessary. He knew the motive of this infatuated girl's conduct. A long experience with her sex had acquainted him with the signification of ambiguous feminine signs. In a few cases he had been misled for all his prognostications—some women are such clever actors! In this particular instance, however, he saw clearly that the little Arab loved him. The serious risk she ran in meeting a Christian here at this hour would alone have proved that.

After vainly awaiting her reply, he continued:

"You are a most seductive and beautiful being, but I feel too sincere a sympathy for your brother, and therefore, I do not wish to take advantage of his helplessness. You will

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never know what struggles this sacrifice costs me. It is best thus, though; so, go Zuleika! go away, my child! Return to your quiet home and forget me. For Saïd's sake, let me act nobly once in my sinful life. Adieu! Leave me, I say!"

"I wouldn't go away!" mumbled she, in a sobbing voice. "Though you don't care for me, I love you! Oh! how I do love you!"

"Zuleika, my dear girl, I insist you should go home. You deserve a better fate than you now foolishly seek. Don't be childish! Stop your crying and go!"

"Kill me, my beloved! my king! but do not reject me. Let me live with you, I implore! I'll be your servant, your slave, your dog! I'll eat the crumbs that fall off your table, but I must live and die near you." Prostrate at his feet she was convulsively weeping and ejaculating: "Oh! take me along, or kill me. Death at your hands would be sweeter than life without you!"

Mortals desire objects in proportion as they

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are hard to get, and woman is peculiarly affected by this weakness. Often the surest means to win her tenderest regard is to scorn it. Eugène's frowns had only served to make Zuleika's flame burn the fiercer. The idea that he did not share her attachment, though maddening, acted as an additional spur to her strong will.

This heartless deceiver did not need to prevaricate to women, or make false vows, for he knew that to seem better than he was would not gain him the quicker a woman's affection. So he was brutally frank and outspoken. Upon various occasions he had told a loving girl whom he might wish to enslave: "I am undeserving of so good a woman as you. There are many men wiser, handsomer, richer than I who would be proud of your love. It is best to forget me. You know, anyway, that I cannot feel deeply, that my soul is but gross and cold, whilst the purest sentiment should inspire me."

Some of Eugène's acquaintances believed that his success with the unreflecting, flighty,

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contrary sex was largely due to this diplomatic candor, and they agreed with him that to win the earth's most precious jewel—woman's love—scruples are not invariably required.

Aside from the fact that indifference frequently charms and attracts Eve's daughters: are not the frivolous and lewd dandies often their chosen-elect? In the chase after a fair one does the virtuous man always outrun the impostor?

The submission of instinct to reason is the grandest human victory, but this sensual Frenchman was improperly armed for so great a conquest over himself. In the beginning of Zuleika's outbursts he was moved only by pity mixed with pride at being worshipped by so beauteous a being; later, his agitation grew almost uncontrollable, and everything tended to enfeeble his resistance. Again he appealed to her Koran, to her brother's affection; once more he depicted the bitterness of the days of inevitable separation: 'twas all in vain.

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"And if Saïd recovers his reason what will he say?"

To all his pleadings she simply murmured, eagerly looking into his eyes:

"I love you. Oh! how I do love you!"

When planning to dissuade her, he had reckoned without that extraordinary stubbornness and his own propensities. Now close to her, the fascinating physical charms attracted his weak flesh as an immense magnet would draw stray bits of steel. With trembling hands he held her doll-like face while his cheeks were aglow and his eyes bulged out, shedding their steel-cold rays; and at this supreme instant, with lips embalmed by the honey of her lips, he caressingly sighed:

"Divine angel! Ineffable Venus! Am I dreaming? Lives there another so entrancing? Yes, my pet! my little darling! come, come with me!"

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## XV.

THE two French visitors had prolonged their sojourn in Egypt beyond the original intention. The young man's days fled so pleasantly in the cozy Villa des Palmiers, on the outskirts of Cairo, where he had installed Zuleika, that he induced his old friend to take permanent quarters in that city. One year had passed agreeably, and the Parisians made no plans to return to Europe. They were satisfied with their "sweet do nothing" in a land where the long balmy winters more than repaid for the disagreeableness of the midsummer months.

At this juncture the colonel found himself obliged to go back to France, owing to business interests requiring his personal supervision. Notwithstanding the fact that every incident had but tended to make his life the more blissful since he arrived in the Delta, Eugène

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felt joyous at the idea of being soon again in Paris. His enthusiasm, it is true, was slightly dampened by some remorse at the thought of leaving his affable *indigène*, but he easily dispelled such effeminate notions.

Her affection had been too deep, she became too devoted, too thoughtful—always anticipating his every wish—and, as a natural consequence, he had grown tired of this lingering sweetness. Yet, how could a Mohammedan assume aught except a slavish attitude in the presence of her traditional master, be he husband or paramour? The quarrels which season love's morsels in the West might poison in the East. It is sad to relate that Zuleika's greatest enemy was her self-abnegation and her idolatry which, having lost the charm of newness, fatigued this *blasé* fellow, making him long for a rebellious, yes, a treacherous mistress, in short, for "Anything for a change!" as he often exclaimed. The puerile desire to have what he had not, what might prove difficult to obtain, was gaining the ascendency over his

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regard for a being too easily enslaved. Besides this, he had been harassed lately by the belief that he was neglecting his great opportunity, Mabel Wilson, whom he felt he could marry if he wished.

"My talent," mused he many a time, "unless backed up by wealth, will not enable me to reach the summit. Gold! gold by the handfuls: there is the talisman that can open all portals!"

When the colonel announced his purpose to pack up soon, his friend said to himself:

"Thank heavens! I was beginning to have enough of this purposeless existence. I shall soon see Mabel and tell her how much I have languished in her absence, and what a fool I was to remain in this forlorn country one minute after her departure."

"Now that we must leave Egypt," remarked Colonel Bon, "I must speak seriously to you. Until this moment I hesitated to unload myself of an oppressing thought, but to-day I cannot remain silent any longer."

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The young man, slightly puzzled, asked:

"Why should you hesitate to tell me anything, my dear colonel? I am mystified to think there could be one fact, however significant or insignificant, that you would keep from me a single hour."

"The case is this, Eugène: in Paris you should not live with a concubine. You may say to me that scores of men do so without being ostracized by any circle. No matter about what others do. I tell you for your own sake, for the sake of your future welfare, you should not follow such examples."

"What made you think I would jeopardize the good opinion of our friends? Most assuredly not. I resolved long ago to change my mode of life after leaving Africa."

"Oh! bravo! my boy! Then you intend to marry her, eh?" the old gentleman applauded.

A glass of iced water thrown in Eugène's face would not have shocked him more.

"What? Marry her? You are joking. Marry her? Certainly not!"

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"Would you then abandon the poor creature and her little one? That's not possible. I must have misunderstood you."

"You have understood me perfectly. I do not intend to take Zuleika along."

"You would leave her! Is it possible? Have I all these years nourished a viper in my bosom?" and shaking his head very slowly while looking into his friend's face as if to unfathom the spirit behind it, the philanthropist continued: "Is she not an ideal wife, though no man has united you? Are you not the father of her babe?"

"She is all that could be desired, colonel, and I feel sorry; nevertheless, I must abandon her. I'll give her several thousand francs and the villa: that is more than most men would do. Marry her! The idea! Preposterous! She——"

"And why not?" dryly interrupted the count, whose jovial physiognomy had now assumed a fierce air.

"Because I am ambitious. Thanks to my

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professional reputation, I may find a wife in the best set—one with a dowry, too. This Egyptian, notwithstanding her goodness and beauty, would drag me down. She is certainly very lovely, loving, lovable, and may God grant her the happiness she so richly merits. I do not expect to find another woman so tender, so charming as this pretty African. But, dear friend, my career is in the balance, and I must silence maudlin sentiments. I am ambitious, I tell you, very ambitious! It is bad enough to have started from a low origin. Would you have her pull me back there again? Why should I contract a vulgar union and miss the opportunities for which I struggled since my miserable infancy? For what, pray, tell me? For sentimental reasons? Tush! I am not going to ruin my future by such idiotic considerations. Let the weak-kneed and soft-brained do that. I have not forgotten the lesson that those who love must suffer, and I intend to keep aloof from the debilitating influences of tenderness.

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After all, I never felt a serious passion for Zuleika, however much I may have been fascinated by her in moments gone by."

"My boy, your words belie your true nature. I cannot believe you would be so ignoble as to leave this child-mother. I know full well that you and your parents have endured cruel hardships, and it is but natural the remembrance should bring forth a bitter taste, making you momentarily misanthropic. Yet, I am certain that you are just and gentle when in your normal condition. Would you make this poor creature and your own daughter suffer because Destiny has been merciless to others? That were bad logic and worse morals. She is beautiful and devoted, and with a few more years of training she will shine in the most select drawing room. You are fully aware what an apt pupil she is. You, yourself, have more than once told me that, already, one might take her for a European. Don't you recollect, also, how often you have spoke feelingly of your affection for her, how many

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times you said that life without her would be a dismal night? Many, many a time have you sworn to me you loved Zuleika with all the intensity of your soul. Remember that evening when, arm in arm, we walked back to my hotel. I shall not soon forget how excited and frightened you were, how violent was your emotion, through sympathy for the young mother and apprehension for her life and that of her offspring. You vowed that night you would kill yourself should Zuleika die. You loved her then, my boy, and don't deceive yourself: you still love her to-day!"

The young man stood mute and sullen.

"In less than a year," pursued the old officer, "no house of the Faubourg Saint-Germain shall receive a more accomplished and fascinating lady than your sweet little Arabian, and I'll be proud to think I made you marry her. You cannot plead poverty; your art enables you to earn a comfortable income, and at my death you shall inherit my fortune." Patting Eugène on the shoulder, he added: "Now be

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a good boy, be a gentleman! I knew you would do the right thing by that girl."

The colonel's voice had become soft and persuasive, and the kindly twinkle in his moist eye told of the noble emotion which he at this moment felt. In his inborn goodness he was deluding himself with the idea that his pleadings had been effectual, but this false notion was quickly removed by an explosion of angry impatience from his well-mannered *protégé*, the like of which he had never before witnessed.

"I have heard enough of this! You were good to me, very good: a father could not have been better, and I owe you more than I can ever repay. For all that, though extremely appreciative I be, you cannot induce me to marry against my wishes. Not even my father could have done that! Let me tell you once more, and for all time: I shall not marry that woman!"

"Very well," quietly said the colonel, while he drew out a bulky document from a small

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strong box in his desk. "Do you see that? it is my will;" so saying he tore it into pieces. This action seemed to revive all his anger, and now thoroughly incensed, he shouted: "You cowardly brute! Don't you ever speak to me again!"

Before these words were pronounced Eugène had disappeared. At the tearing of the testament, knowing all was ended between himself and guardian, he had shrugged his shoulders and dignifiedly walked out of the apartment.

The kindness of Colonel Bon was quite unlike that of many advocates of charity whose lives are unbroken chains of petty selfishness, for all their benevolent maxims, either tacit or expressed. It is astounding how many there are who, though weeping sincere tears during pathetic scenes in a play, and though preaching eloquently about our duty toward the poor, yet carefully refrain from doing a good deed, if that involve the slightest personal sacrifice.

The goodness of Count de Danvré was more than theoretical and subjective: it extended as

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far as his wealth and the occasion allowed. So lofty a nature could not leave this wretched young mother to the future that, in similar straits, awaits a good-looking and helpless woman. Eugène had no sooner left than the colonel started to right the wrong. Fearful that the outraged, though still infatuated, Arabian might commit suicide, he immediately drove to her villa. Had he understood Zuleika he would not have entertained that fear. The determination to reconquer her lover surpassed her despair at losing him, and the imperious will that had remained in a state of lethargy while he was near, at this awful hour reasserted itself for the excellent purpose of checking her suicidal impulses.

After reading the farewell he had lacked the courage to bid in person, she determined to follow the father of her babe to the ends of the earth, not with a feeling of anger, not to revenge herself as Christian women often do—an Oriental could hardly be actuated by such motives toward one whom she regarded as the

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slave does his master—Zuleika merely planned to be near him again at any cost. During the joyful months passed with Eugène she had not given up the hope of striking a responsive chord in him, although he never abandoned himself fully to transports of affection, although he had never said to her: "I love thee!" Her disappointment, her heart-sinking at the realization of his thinly-veiled apathy, always increased the faith in her own power to ultimately win his tenderest regard.

Man, in spite of his logic, gropes in the dark as to the morrow, but, when a girl loves, no matter how young or ignorant she be, her insight into the future of heart affairs is often startlingly prophetic. Intuition opened to Zuleika one hopeful page in the book of Life. Having observed more than once a glimmer of tenderness in her idol's eyes, an ineffable expression telling more vividly than words and acts that he was vulnerable to some thing, whatever that might be, she now felt certain of inspiring his love, if she could but discover the

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right way to that end. Like a flash the truth lighted her soul: clear as the noonday sun she, at this despairing crisis, foresaw that pity, gratitude, or remorse, mayhap these three sentiments combined, would one day instil the most exalted affection into his hard and impervious heart.

The ardor of this hope, fanned by an intense grief, strengthened her will, but could neither soothe the spirit nor stem the flow of tears. Time alone might do that. After the perusal of his cruel though courteous message, unconsciousness, like a heaven-woven veil, softly descended upon the forsaken.

When she reopened her eyes, the maid and Colonel Bon were at her bedside. Brave and good man! He had come to satisfy her dearest wish.

"You are young and pretty, and you will soon forget him. There will be no dearth of better and richer suitors when you are the educated woman I intend you should be. To begin with, you may henceforth regard me as

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a father, and I am going to have little Eugènie baptized as Vicomtesse de Danvré, if you don't object to my adopting her."

Smiles and abundant tears expressed Zuleika's joy. Fortunately the colonel did not know the exact cause of her happiness, and his pleasure remained unalloyed for he believed she was virtually reconciled to her situation, thanks to the honors and material comforts he proffered. The fact was, her bliss resulted solely from the belief that his magnanimity would enable her the swifter to regain her beloved.

She recalled vividly that he had once told her while holding her head in his hands: "If you could add to this beauty the refinement of Mabel, I might love you to desperation!" And she resolved, while Colonel Bon spoke:

"I shall not rest until I acquire the manners of a European lady."

Women do not forget a lover's words. Though they be ejaculated in jest or during irresponsible moments when the boiling blood

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obscures the brain, those devoted beings store away such empty sounds in their memory as if they were priceless jewels. Without wasting an instant, gentle voices harmonize with this passing chord, but man is so inconstant, so inconsistent, that the tones in his soul have nothing of music, save its saddest quality—its transitoriness. No sooner has he sung his verse than he forgets it while, alas! within some woman's heart it must ring on undying.

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## XVI.

A WHOLE year has dragged on its weary way without bringing news of Eugène. In vain has Zuleika written to opera houses, conservatories of music, and theatrical agencies: "Poste Restante, Cairo," is the only address of Maëstro Duprez they know.

She is certain he has not succumbed to a disease, for he was very strong and healthy; and the notion that he might have committed suicide through remorse is absurd, because, should he regret his conduct, all he need to do is to return and be welcomed and forgiven.

Having lost track of him from the day she received the brutal notice of his departure, she concludes he is hiding his identity to escape her importunities. Zuleika feels sure Eugène lives in France under an assumed name, perhaps not far from Paris, and the bitterness of

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her life is attenuated by an exultant hope of seeing him soon again.

Musical and literary studies, elocution, riding, dancing, and fencing leave her but a few hours each day for the care of her child, which scarcely needs its mother, thanks to a thorough nurse the colonel has hired exclusively for the little one. The absorption of Zuleika's time is a blessing especially at this period; were she idle, the fixed idea to find her lover would unbalance her reason. Even though much occupied, she is often obsessed by thoughts of him. It frequently happens that, in the midst of absorbing studies, her mind suddenly becomes a blank, and she finds herself incapable of concentrating her ideas upon the subject in hand. The hero of every book is then Eugène, about him every poem sings, and no frame encircles an image, save that of his features beautifully idealized by her love-sick fancy.

She carefully abstains from mentioning his name in the colonel's presence, although no

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theme of conversation could be sweeter to her and to him, too, for that matter; but she does not know he still loves that boy. The dignified silence he has invariably maintained upon questions relating to his former *protégé* led Zuleika to believe it would be distasteful to him to hear her speak of Eugène; and, at times, this self-imposed prohibition to exchange views regarding the only subject that interests her, a *leit-motiv* upon which the wind sighs, the stream gurgles, and the birds twitter, drives her poetic soul to paroxysms of anguish.

In the solitude of her *boudoir* this disdained Venus, during climaxes of insane rage, tears off her costly velvet *peignoir* and silken undergarments; then, majestically as a Roman Empress, Zuleika poses before her mirror in the celestial attire God Himself made, and calmly surveys the beauteous reflection. Slowly and admiringly glides her glance over small ankle, projecting calf, sensuous hip, undulating torso, and voluptuous neck; when it finally lingers

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upon the cherubim head crowned by wondrous waves of lustrous jet black hair, the abandoned charmer haughtily queries: "Could another offer him more?" After that, she clothes her divine form and sinks upon her couch: praying, moaning, cursing until, exhausted, she sleeps.

Every day Zuleika scans the journals expecting to find some clew. At his Paris *début*, a new violinist may always depend upon two auditors: a maid and her pretty and stylish young mistress, "a *mignonnette* woman with a skin of strange hue, and with eyes that could melt steel." Thus was Zuleika described in *Gil Blas*.

Dreams of Eugène frequently disturb her sleep. Each time he seems to appear in flesh and blood. Upon awaking she tries to dissipate the idea that he has manifested himself in person, but she cannot: it clings to her mind as burr to the hair.

"It is absurd. This apparition was only an hallucination," thinks she, "and yet, Eugène

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appeared just as real to me as if he actually stood within the reach of my hand. I wonder whether it is possible to behold realities during dreams."

Intelligent and quick of perception though she was, this young woman could not be expected to stand in advance of most psychologists; and these certainly deny the possibility of clairvoyance and telepathy. Thus to Zuleika these dreams at first were but meaningless states of consciousness; now, however, owing to their frequency, their vividness, and their logical sequence, they influenced her opinion until she became convinced her nightly visions portrayed actualities.

The central figure in the imagery is always Eugène, and facts revolve about him in a natural order. Each night brings him into a different scene, the incidents of which seem rational and plausible; many of these are commonplace, just as is our daily life.

In the beginning of his absence she dreams he sails for Marseilles under a pseudonym,

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intending to hide from her during one year: time enough, thinks he, to enable Zuleika to forget him. Arriving with very little money he gives concerts under the appellation of Giovanni Parodi; this name being unknown to critics and public, the receipts barely cover expenses, and his manager leaves him penniless. A gifted artist, whose name alone would have filled a concert hall, plays to empty benches and is unfavorably criticised. The world must be given the cue when to applaud; if the aspirant after its laurels come unheralded, he is usually hooted, however worthy he be.

Later, she sees Eugène giving violin lessons to the young son of a titled woman, a despicable creature who induces the virtuoso to elope with her. Having no means of subsistence, he yields, though he loathes this woman. Her husband, a fellow without nerves, simply seeks a legal separation.

Only last night Zuleika beheld her beloved at the window of his library which looks upon

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the Champs Elysées. He puffs out white clouds of smoke and lazily watches the fantastical evanescent silhouettes they trace in their tortuous ascension.

She hears him muse:

"When man is resting from his labors smoking is an excellent pastime: it acts like a Turkish bath to the mind and soothes it by diverting the ideas from their habitual grooves into empty space. This is not your case, though, you loafer! Nothing to do day in and day out. Smoking simply to dispel boredom: I, whose life has always been active and hopeful. Oh! it is horrible I should be condemned to this idleness! It will drive me mad, if it lasts much longer. Yet, what am I to do? I have no money and must obey: she does not want me to study."

He feels heavily the burden of his soulless existence. This coarse woman has told him:

"I don't want you to play any better. You will always do well enough for me, and, anyhow, you know very well I would not let you

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play in public. Do you suppose I long to have you attract rivals?''

Her large fortune, the commanding position she held until this latest brazen escapade, and twenty years of domination over a namby-pamby, silly-nilly sort of a husband have developed in her an arrogant, imperious, and tyrannical character. Eugène realizes that, though she is infatuated with him, he has no power over her.

In Zuleika's dreams the puffs of smoke continue to rise, but they do not seem to alleviate his deep disgust. The dear image is still at the library window reflecting:

''In a sumptuous house, with a long retinue of servants, and yet, lonely and depressed as a caged sparrow, though his roof be of gold and his floor of pearls. What an end to my career! The toy, the puppet of a Lucretia Borgia! Was this the great future for which, against the dictates of my better self, I abandoned poor Zuleika and her child? Yes indeed, the colonel was right: I am a cowardly brute!''

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As he utters this sentence, his head is tightly drawn to the left by an automatic muscular contraction, and he looks frowningly and suspiciously toward the heavens as if a big threatening eye up there had just glared at him. The upper lip rises while the nostrils close, although there are no offensive odors about; between the expression of moral pain and of physical suffering exist many analogies. Contempt of himself gives him the appearance caused by wounded olfactory nerves, as if nauseating exhalations from a decaying soul had crept into his very nostrils!

After this vision Zuleika remained pensively awake for hours, and finally yielded to sleep at the birth of day.

Eugène reappears to her, this time in the magnificent hall of his residence, which he jerkily paces up and down like a captive hyena. She hears him exclaim excitedly:

"Because my parents left no money, I must carry their cross with the rest of the human herd. What can I do without that modern

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Juggernaut? Though filled with great aims I am treacherously stabbed in the night of a moneyless Fate, and I must cringe before this revolting female. So great is her perversity, her effrontery, her shamelessness that she finds a ghoulish delight in exhibiting me. The nymphomaniac wants to drive me every afternoon through the Bois de Boulogne to fling me in the face of her former friends as if to say: 'That is mine, even though I have to pay for it. Can a *cocotte* or a high-born lady beat this?' Foul cur that I am! The worms themselves are better off: they at least can crawl and hide into the earth! Perhaps I ought not to chafe under this humiliating yoke for millions of others on this planet are, like myself, crushed in one form or another by the indignities the hand of gold can inflict upon the starving. This poverty makes of me a slave, even more miserable than a negro born in bondage, because through his density and inexperience he may regard his condition as natural, while I, having tasted and lost the

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sweet fruits of wealth and liberty, can but rebel with all my might against an outrageous Providence. Thank heavens, the time is fast approaching when my incognito will become needless: the little Egyptian must have met another man before this. In fact, I often think I was a fool to hide at all: women are so changeable, so easily consoled! Before the end of the month I shall leave this execrable house and find Mabel again. Everything is purchasable nowadays. Love is commerce, statesmanship is business, and many men sell country, wife, and child. Why should I hesitate to barter away my own self? With Mabel's wealth, I shall be able to lift my head quite high among the world's *élite*, and in this sordid——"

Zuleika's dream was interrupted here by her maid bringing, at the usual hour of ten, a cup of thick chocolate, a crescent, and a copy of *Le Figaro*.

The abnormal mental state in which, without the use of the five known senses, one may ap-

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prehend a fact at any distance, is understood by a handful of psychologists. The nervous tension bordering on hysteria under which this excitable Arabian had labored during months of torment, was peculiarly apt to induce, while asleep, the exalted condition of somnambulism. Her unscientific mind applied the popular term, dream, to the inexplicable phenomenon of her nocturnal experiences. But, though she could neither prove nor explain this occult faculty, yet she was convinced of having discovered the existence of a sixth sense. Zuleika to-day felt sure that her night visions had been real occurrences.

Upon this subject she questioned her physician, a man widely known for his scientific knowledge and common sense.

"Doctor! Don't you believe one might see actualities in dreams?"

In view of the limited comprehension of psychic phenomena prevalent among physiologists it is not to be wondered at that this doctor of medicine laughed at her notion, pronouncing it absurd *ex cathedra:*

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"Your idea runs counter all common sense and scientific data. You should relegate such cobwebs to superstitious old women, and to spiritists and other lunatics!"

Common sense and science, of course, were infallible with this schoolman. He had forgotten that, a few centuries ago, it was common sense to say the earth was flat and Columbus' continents a myth. He perhaps did not recollect that only some years since, a scientific man of common sense exclaimed, "Fraud! 'T is ventriloquism!" when he first heard the phonograph. Consequently, from his common point of view, Zuleika's physician had doubtless talked common sense.

Rare indeed is the scientist who ever keeps before him as a guiding star the axiom: My ignorance of a fact is no bar to its possibility. To perforate the accumulated accretions on truth's integument formed by centuries of crass ignorance, unrelenting prejudice, and misleading books needs a strong and courageous lance. Zuleika's doctor was hardly that.

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This learned man simply typified the average scholastic mind which, though teeming with learning, may yet be absolutely lacking in the essentials of genius—wisdom and intuition.

After swallowing a mouthful of chocolate, she looked at her morning paper and read the following item, worded in the usual flippant tone, when conjugal faithlessness is the theme in France:

"The high life will have something spicy to talk about for the coming fortnight aside from the Dreyfus affair.

"Baroness X ——, already notorious for similar indiscretions, recently left her sweet (*sic*) hearth. This time the Romeo is an Italian violinist by many years her junior. His musical gifts, some aver, are the cause of the baroness' folly. Those, however, who are *au courant* maintain that his ruddy cheeks deserve all the blame. Whatever be the cause, not having consulted the lady, her momentous reason must remain conjectural.

"Instead of shooting the father of his own

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children, the baron has simply sued for a divorce. Next!''

Dropping the journal she shouted gleefully:

''I knew my dreams were true! Thank heavens! I shall soon see his dear face again.''

Except for the omission of some insignificant incidents and the haziness of all the details, this hysterical woman's visions had portrayed Eugène's life from the moment he embarked at Alexandria some twelve months ago.

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## XVII.

THAT afternoon a messenger brought an anonymous note to Eugène addressed to Signor Giovanni Parodi. The stationery indicated good taste, and its suggestion of heliotrope left little doubt as to the writer's sex; the caligraphy, also, was feminine.

"Ah! ah! another conquest perhaps. Let's see what this one has to say," remarked he, and then read:

"A lady wishes to meet Monsieur Eugène Duprez in the Salon de Lecture of the Continental Hotel to-morrow at eleven in the morning."

"That is odd! This handwriting is entirely new to me. Whose could it be? It is probably that of some romantic young girl who has heard me at a concert. But how on earth did

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she know I was at the baroness' hotel under an assumed name! I am also curious to find out why she did not sign her note. I see, now. Maybe she is married. No matter! *à demain*, then, *ma chérie!*"

At the appointed hour, the virtuoso, dressed exactly like an English gentleman, which means like the best-dressed man that treads this earthly globe, entered the glass inclosure in the court of the swell hostelry, and made a bee-line for the place of rendezvous. In a nonchalant manner he thumbed foreign reviews while glancing occasionally at the few women in the room, and thinking:

"It cannot be this one: she ought to know better than to flirt at her age. Oh! may be it is that blonde over there. No, impossible! Her eye met mine twice, and she gave no response. Could it be a joke? What acquaintance have I that would dare do such a thing? Enemies? Preposterous! They could not find enough pleasure in so tame a hoax. By Jove! I wonder whether the baroness laid

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this trap for me. What a row when I get back if that's the case!"

While he was racking his brain with other suppositions, a miniature gloved hand, light as a rose leaf, reposed upon his arm. He turned, exclaiming:

"Zuleika!"

"Hush! don't talk so loud, Eugène; we might attract attention. My *coupé* is at the door; follow me, won't you? While riding we shall not be disturbed. I must speak with you," she hastily whispered.

The dress she wore was stylish and of dark cloth; the skirt rather long and full at the bottom; above, it fitted tightly, except behind where it was set in little pleats that widened as they descended. It was embroidered on each side with designs in black velvet, inlaid on the cloth in the form of branches. Her corsage was of the polonaise style, independent of the skirt; it had one pointed lapel on the right side, and was, like the apron of the skirt, embroidered with branches. Her neck was en-

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circled by a wide velvet bow with a big square buckle in the center studded with diamonds, and a belt of gold thread and pearls clasped her slender waist. Near the left lapel of her corsage, dangled a watch hardly larger than the nail of her little finger, and covered with small rubies. Upon Zuleika's well-poised head rested a toque draped with white tulle spotted with silver spangles. This coquettish hat arose rather higher on the left side, underneath it laid a black feather drooping over her abundant, overflowing chignon, while on the right, another black feather stood proudly perpendicular. Around the shoulders carelessly hung a cape of Russian sable. But for the odd tint of her skin, this high-toned woman would have been taken for a member of the very ultra select Parisian aristocracy. She carried herself with such ease and grace that no one could have fancied the lady had ever stepped except over thick carpets across splendid drawing rooms. Her language harmonized with this gracious presence. The peculiarity

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of her idioms and pronunciation, divulging their Eastern origin, added piquancy to the rigid syntax and strangely chosen diction that characterize the well-educated foreigner, be he in Paris or Tokio.

After entering the carriage, Zuleika briefly related her past since the day Eugène left her. Their baby had died months ago, but she was so happy to be with him that the remembrance of this maternal grief cast no shadow over her present bliss. Although she had adored the little one, Zuleika resigned herself easily to the loss of a daughter born under such sad conditions. "Considering these circumstances," believed she, "Eugénie is better off in heaven."

"I cannot help wondering at your marvelous progress in the art of *savoir-vivre*. It is a complete metamorphosis, and in so short a time, too! You cannot conceive how much your beauty is enhanced by the charm of your manners." In brief, he was captivated. "Will you forgive me, Zuleika?"

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"Certainly, I forgive you. But you shall never leave me again, will you?"

"My darling! you were and you still are the sweetest, the loveliest woman I know!"

"Yes, you have told me that times unnumbered, but oh! do say to me that you love me, that you will always stay by me!"

"If I were rich I would marry you to-day and never, never again pass another hour without my dear, dainty Zuleika."

"Pshaw! Why don't you do as I say? Why won't you vow never again to leave me?" asked she impatiently while stamping her tiny boot.

"Dearest! you should be reasonable. I may truthfully assert that I care more for you than for any other woman. Notwithstanding this, I cannot marry you, I cannot even promise to live always with you. We are too poor."

"What of that! A piece of rye bread in a hut with you were paradise to me. I'll make you happy, though we be penniless. You'll forget your poverty. I'll be so good to you!"

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While speaking she had gradually tightened her clasp around his neck, and now was covering his eyes and lips with ardent kisses.

Delicately loosening the plump little arms that nearly strangled him, Eugène waited an instant that she might regain her composure after this immoderate outburst of passion, and then said:

"Let us love again without that fearful compact, Forever! If one of us were wealthy, no joy could be comparable to ours. I assure you, under such conditions, I would not seek happiness elsewhere. Life is so stern, however, without money that, sooner or later, I would regret having wedded an impecunious wife, no matter how good she be; therefore, I have decided to marry a wealthy woman, if I should ever give up bachelorhood. I value your affection, my beloved, and I know I am unworthy of it. But, dear Zuleika, all the love in the universe would not buy food and clothing nor pay house rent."

The two had left the vehicle some minutes

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since and were slowly entering hand in hand the woods of Saint Cloud.

While he was speaking an inward voice told her:

"Futile are thy entreaties, thy alluring charms and fine education. In vain hast thou toiled day and night to become a lady. Gold alone can win that man," and she mentally responded with terrible emphasis:

"I shall find him the gold then!"

While these thoughts zigzagged her brain, Zuleika's demeanor grew calmer; meanwhile, Eugène's ardor increased visibly, but she gently repressed his effusions, and using the feminine prerogative, flatly refused to let him kiss her unless he vowed to abide with her forever.

"I cannot deceive you. It is impossible to agree to this. Since I was born I have been unable to support myself in the style I wish; still less can I support two. I am ambitious and must have wealth at any price. With me, as you already learned to your sorrow, the

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heart always receives a secondary consideration. I cannot promise what you ask, Zuleika."

"Is that your final word?"

"I am sorry, yet it must be."

"*Au revoir*, then, Eugène!" and hastily entering her carriage, she was driven off alone.

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## XVIII.

His incognito being no longer necessary, the musician reappeared as a violin virtuoso. Fame kept pace with his singular merit, and a short time after the preceding interview with Zuleika, having severed his degrading *liaison*, he found himself, as of yore, petted by the opulent and the great. His fees invested at a low rate of interest would have enriched him in a few years, had it not been that, following the example of the majority of artists, he was a spendthrift. An elegant apartment in the Avenue de l'Opera, and a pretty villa at Monte Carlo, ate up the princely receipts faster than they came. After concert tours bringing larger and larger returns, he yet was in debt.

At this period he stood in dire pecuniary straits. A note for five thousand pounds was about to mature and his latest bank statement

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showed less than two thousand. To complicate matters this occurred in August, precisely when the musical season is at a standstill. Perplexed, tantalized, and foreseeing no escape except in marriage, he decided to offer Mabel his hand. So cavalier-like a solution when a bachelor is confronted by a serious financial problem is not very uncommon in our utilitarian age.

Without further elucidation, Eugène's plan might seem absurdly presumptuous in view of Miss Wilson's discernment; the circumstances, however, warranted him fully in looking at this union in the light of an accomplished fact. In every mail came long and affectionate letters from her. It was not yesterday either that she had revealed the state of her feelings. Time had gone by when reading between the lines was required, for, to-day, this proud young lady unequivocally wrote that she could never be a happy woman without him.

An unusual mind had not unsexed the highly-endowed girl. Though she had a

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clear perception of his malignant character, she still loved with all the warmth and sincerity of her noble soul. Her affection led her to believe he was not beyond redemption, and an unspeakable tenderness inspired the lofty hope of making a model husband of this satanical rake.

Where is your logic now, Miss Wilson? Where are your reasoning powers? It is much easier to reflect and argue calmly and wisely about the love affairs of others, is it not?

"I will reform him," resolved she. "I will bring to him what he lost with his mother: that is a task well worth the most strenuous effort of any wife. I know that underneath his badness there is a layer of good which only needs unearthing. I wonder whether he shall prove the exception to the awful rule of recidivism: Once a criminal, always a criminal? No matter! I shall gladly suffer for him so long as I can suffer near him. Ah! I begin to understand why intellectual men may fall into the snares of the silliest girls."

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Come forth! thou poisoned Flower of Love. Wither another heart in thy petals of death and pour into a new cup thy inebriating philter. Thou hesitatest? 'Tis but one more self-immolating victim that naïvely asks to inhale thy sweet toxic.

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## XIX.

THE leaves are returning to Good Mother Earth and swallows hasten south. It is the time of the year stray patches of green give the country in northern zones the aspect of a vast leopard skin. It is autumn, when living vegetation still struggles against the advancing hosts of decay which, obeying Nature's stern law, trample over variegated fields, bruising fruit and flower, while they daub brook, hill, and dale in one single mournful color. At this period, Fate's favored few, volatile as the dwellers of the air, fly with them to softer climes, and the sunny azure shores of the sea consecrated by Petrarch become enlivened by human humming birds, a sociologist more precise than polite might label, Mosquitoes.

The winter stations along the Riviera, out-

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doing one another in splendor, are supremely overshadowed by a heavenly diadem in their center—Monte Carlo! that fairy-like nook of France with the flora of Persia, that paradise for mortal souls.

Mohammed's worldly heaven itself offers no more than is here for the well-filled purse: a symphony orchestra, the opera and the play with galaxies of stars, gambling in its most seducing forms, sybaritic cooking and rarest vintages, sumptuous residences and palatial hotels. Then—most interesting of all!—resplendent pea-hens, frivolous as beauteous, and made even more bewitching by æsthetic milliners and lapidaries, may be seen strutting and crowing about the atrium, the concert-hall, and the gorgeous gaming rooms, dropping their feathers around the suicide-breeding tables under the escort of males more courtly than learned, who, in the conventional, solemn, lugubrious dress coat, suggest turkey-buzzards.

This, and much more than one would dare tell, is observed in the midst of a natural

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*scenario*, surpassing in its picturesque reality all the inventions of the idyllic poets.

On the veranda of the Café de Paris, facing the Church of Sainte-Roulette, Eugène is leisurely taking his noon bitter. A splendid equipage draws up within a few feet of his table, and a footman in severe black livery with a crape cockade on the tall hat opens the carriage door to a young woman in widow's weeds who advances, offering her hand, while saying:

"My dear Eugène, how happy I am to see you again!"

"I am also very—very glad to see you. How came you to wear this veil, Zuleika?"

"I am a widow. Can't you see?"

"A widow! this is certainly news. And whose, I pray?"

"Alas! it is a long and pathetic story; but, I shall be brief. You doubtless remember why I left you at Saint-Cloud; it will be two years Monday. I have a good memory, have I not?"

"At Saint-Cloud. Why! to be sure!" said

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he, wonderingly, for he had absolutely forgotten why she left him there; forgotten! while in her heart that reason was branded with a red-hot iron. He went on: "Of course, now I recollect. We had a little quarrel, had we not?"

"Yes, and when you told me that you could not marry me because we were poor, I set out there and then to get rich."

A fearful truth at these words flashed upon him. His rosy complexion turned livid, cadaverous, and icy centipedes crept across his shoulder blades. His teeth chattered: had he wished to speak he could not have pronounced two syllables. His right leg resting upon the toes moved up and down at a frightful rate without leaving the floor, indicating an uncontrollable state of nervousness. That unrelaxing iron will appalled him. Filled with shame and remorse he, at this moment, envied the roaches: they could hide in dark crevices, while he was forced to face his conscience and that martyrized woman.

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"I made the colonel think I loved him and he offered me his name," Zuleika pursued. "To postpone the date of our wedding from week to week, I had to resort to much trickery, I can assure you. One night, finally, the physicians informed me he could not last until morning. Then only did I accept his title and fortune, that I might come to you wealthy and still faithful, a widow only in name. We are rich now, Eugène. Nothing in this life can keep us apart. Aren't you very glad?"

"Zuleika," stuttered he tremblingly, "let us take a short walk towards the railway station. I cannot speak here."

Silently they followed the cemented pathways lined with aloes, palms, magnolias, cactuses and other exotic plants. Through the smiling garden on the rock that holds the magnificent Casino, and faces the castle of Monaco's prince, they advanced oblivious of their lovely surroundings, wholly unconcerned with a scene in which Nature and Art have

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wedded to create ineffable beauty. To see this mournful couple pass by one might have fancied they were on their road to the gallows. Measuredly, Eugène and Zuleika descended the easy steps, their eyes, the while, vacantly staring at the stupendous shell of mother-of-pearl formed by the sea at their feet and its opal dome.

At last, his courage returning, he broke the painful silence:

"I am the worst of men. When I recall your devotion and the tortures endured for me, I wish a tribunal would sentence me to death: the punishment might atone in part for my crime. Zuleika! I may have been incapable of loving, but not of suffering, and here stands before you a soul in agony." His eyes obscured with honest tears, he pursued: "The hour of retribution has already sounded. I shall never know another restful day. Let one more sacrifice proclaim your divine heroism: I too am heroic just now, far more than you may ever know. Promise me never again

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to tempt me. I do not ask this for my own sake: I deserve nothing at your hands. I implore it upon my bended knees for an innocent being, for—my wife!"

"I promise that, Eugène, but I keep eternally the privilege of praying Allah to send you back to me."

"Good-by, poor Zuleika!"

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## XX.

MABEL attributed to her benign influence the fact that her husband had become a better man. It is true she regretted he was growing a little too serious. Of late she had had frequent occasions to suffer at the sight of his melancholy, the cause of which she could neither trace nor remove. Her sympathy forced her many a time to share his inexplicable depression; nevertheless, she usually consoled herself with the conviction that no other woman reigned in Eugène's heart. Mabel's fear that he might return to his customary dissipations was allayed. The noisy pleasures and the thoughtless women had lost their empire over him. He, formerly so gallant, so eager of new conquests, now barely noticed the bevy of feather-brained coquettes who fluttered about him. He managed his wife's estate with judi-

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cious care, and spent upon himself much less than he earned. The desire to shine as a social meteor had vanished, and instead of struggling to that end, he divided his attention between a cherished wife and his congenial studies.

Alas! it requires more than the wisest and most devoted love to make a dear one happy; thus, in spite of Mabel's tactful and generous affection, her husband was far from satisfied. She often queried:

"Why such a big sigh, Eugène? You work too hard, I fear. I do not ask that you resume your former extravagances—that were going too far the other way—but I do wish you might be more jovial. You seem so distracted: what ails you? Is there anything I may do to make you more contented with your lot?"

"Nothing, dear. I am as well off as I can be, and certainly I am more so than I deserve. Have I not your love? I should not let you see me, save when in my best moods; unfor-

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tunately I am not always able to control my morbid mental manifestations."

"No matter about me, Eugène. It is of you that I think. I wish I could know the spring of those melancholy spells. Might not this present depression be a reaction from your tempestuous past?"

"Possibly. Whatever be the explanation, it is well not to linger upon this theme."

She discreetly sat down at the piano, improvised a few measures, and after modulating into the dominant seventh of the key of F hummed in a dreamy *mezza-voce* a bit of song she often sang to him far away in Egypt from the loneliness of her Sussex country seat.

As the final lingering organ point imperceptibly died away, she said:

"Before leaving you for the last time, as you then thought, do you remember how apparently indifferent I was, how trifling were my parting words? I was trying so eagerly to conceal the tenderness I felt toward you that I must have seemed feelingless. Oh! my

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beloved, could you have read within my soul the day I left you in Cairo bound for England, I might have escaped the two horribly dismal years I passed in Glenmere away from you. Our estate is charming, as you know, the shooting fair, the horses excellent, and our modern house as convenient as a home can be; in addition, agreeable friends from many parts visit us in rapid succession, and famous *littérateurs* and musicians seldom come to London without breaking bread at our board: yet, for all that, my only pleasure during those unhappy years came from reading and re-reading your letters."

While she sang and spoke he remained in a profound reverie, a state habitual to him when she made professions of affection; then he abruptly broke the thread of her thoughts by an irrelevant suggestion, as he was wont to do in analagous instances:

"By the way, have you mastered that passage in sixths in the finale of Rubinstein's sonata for violin and piano? I mean the

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sonata beginning in so fresh and exhilarating a way as to make the players feel they are entering woodlands together on a perfect May morning, while the air is pregnant with the odor of violets, lilies, and hyacinths, and nightingales in the tall trees blend their roulades, appogiaturas, and fiorituras to the pedal notes of the crawling things that snore in the damp grass. Let us try that entire work again, what say you?"

And for the hundredth time this couple dispelled their sadness by the aid of that innocuous art.

"Music, of all earthly pleasures, is the only one that leaves no after-taste."

"You are quite right, Mabel. Everything with time turns insipid, all sensations pall upon our blunted palate, and regret or remorse treads over the heel of each joy. Music, on the contrary, grows keener, more delicious as we advance in years. Perhaps it is thus to compensate us for the loss of other delights. The gentle muse, instead of scat-

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tering shame or sorrow on its way, as most pleasures do, generally fills us with loftier aims and nobler aspirations. Nowadays, aside from you, my good wife, there is left to me only music to lighten the chain I must drag to the sepulchral shore."

This was not exact. Something else besides Mabel and music could have invigorated his blighted soul, but that was a thing he dared not speak of. It was an object dearer than life itself, grander than all the earth and the seas it contains, vaster than the scintillating heavens of a perfect night in June—it was Zuleika! Zuleika whom he now loved to perdition.

From the hour of the bitter parting at Monte Carlo a feeling of inexpressible pathos had invaded his being. No day went by without a violent inner struggle tearing him asunder. He wanted to fly to Zuleika, yet hesitated to commit another infamy by abandoning a loving wife. His brain incessantly ached with these conflicting motives. Only on Sun-

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days, at church, did he find rest: there the weight upon his chest seemed lightened. He knew no prayer, having forgotten the one his mother taught him; nevertheless, the reverence he to-day felt towards an Infinite Unknown found eloquent expression in his dumb humility. Had he not been bound to the world by his marital ties he would long since have entered a monastery: a life of privations, thought he, might stop the abominable and unending gnawing at his soul. Like other mortals when in despair he, too, looked above for consolation and found a merciful God.

Though Eugène lacked the moral strength to go to his adored Egyptian, he could not refrain from seeking information relating to her. One memorable day he got the following report from his agent:

"Cairo, March 28, 1898.

"Sir: The Countess de Danvré was carried this morning to the Villa des Palmiers which, I am told, she owns since about four years.

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One of her servants said to me that the countess formerly lived there with a European she was very fond of, and the reason why she quits her extensive suite at Ghesireh Palace for that less comfortable place is in order that she may die among suggestions of a past sweet to her. Dr. Mathews, our leading specialist on pulmonary diseases, thinks she will not see the end of the winter season."

Immediately after reading this, Eugéne left the house, while his wife was momentarily out. When she returned, the maid handed her this note:

"DEAR MABEL: I am unable to explain my miserable conduct and I shall not endeavor to excuse it. You are a perfect wife, and though I have never felt for you what is termed love, I would have stayed near you until the grave, respecting and appreciating your noble womanhood. But I have now a great reparation to make—an ugly sin to expiate—and for that I am obliged to abandon you. There is no other means. Were I to remain with this canker on my conscience, I could but make

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your life intolerable and, in any manner, I would soon do away with my worthless self.

"You lose nothing in losing me. I am a vile beast any one should be glad to get rid of.

"Adieu! Forever!

"May God watch over you!

"EUGENE DUPREZ."

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## XXI.

On the steamer that carried him at too slow a speed to Ismaïlia, this wretched man was constantly assailed by sorrowful reflections. While the other passengers peacefully slumbered, he nervously paced up and down the deck, glaring at the black opaque waters below, symbolic of his future, thinking:

"Ah! you sought the chimera of ephemeral fruits and now your mouth is filled with ashes. For moments of earthly bliss you must pay with an eternity of torment. I am glad my senses shall not harass me much longer. I have floated far enough as a moral derelict upon life's ocean. Vigor of mind and muscles has departed and in my hair are traces of snow—at twenty-six! If she die, my martyrdom will be that of the damned. Forever shall I weep in my impotence to dry the tears

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I caused. My life without her will be a living death. Who knows but at this very instant she is expiring! Oh! no! that could not be! I shall see her again and in the glow of my love revive that frail tropical flower. She is so good, so young too! Grant her life, O God! Let me undo the wrong I have done."

Since the last meeting on the Riviera, Zuleika's spirit had been like a bee blown by a sudden gust of wind from a fragrant clump of pomegranates into a dreary waste more dismal than the Sahara. Arid lands have their green confines, their dazzling canopies, and here and there cool oases, but this poor child's hopeless soul now floated through sunless days and starless nights over a mournful plain without horizon.

Until the announcement of Eugène's marriage she had nourished the hope that some sacrifice or other would bring him back. To-day, the last air-castle had crumbled away, leaving her heart crushed and bleeding.

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In spite of all her sufferings, at no time did she entertain the slightest feeling of resentment. She felt only a boundless love and a profound gratitude for having reigned in his fancy, though her reign had lasted but the length of a season.

To-day, this beautiful Mohammedan was succumbing without complaining, owing to her fatalistic religion. As she was about to expire, Heaven, pitying her, portrayed a celestial imagery: the soul no less than the desert has its illusive mirages. In the final paroxysm of delirium she sees her idol approach the house through the alley of orange-trees, his horse bleeding from spur wounds. Close to her sunken cheek now lays his cheek, besmeared with the dust of travel and the tears shed for her; and through the vapory cloud of her last agony, he and she sit side by side upon the verdant banks of the River of Love.

As the nurse and the physician conclude the end has come, they are astonished to behold the moribund's eyes reopen, staring at an in-

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visible object in front. The hectic flush reappears through a new impulse given the sluggish blood, and dying Zuleika looks supremely happy. Slowly raising her desiccated arms and crossing them upon her breast as in the act of enfolding the sweetest being in the whole universe, she babbles in a soft monotone, high-pitched and sounding as an echo from the tomb:

"I knew you would come back. From the first hour we met a voice whispered we were made for each other, and though divided, yet united by indissoluble ligaments that distance, years, yea, crimes! could not sever. My youth, my babe, my education, my fortune—all was in vain! 'T is pity, pity for Zuleika dying to gain your love that touched your heart. Oh! I am so happy! so happy! because, now you love me——"

Allah had answered her prayer too late. While a servant was tenderly lowering the silken black lashes over ghastly protruding eyeballs, Eugène rushed into the room

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like a madman and in a heart-wringing tone cried:

"Am I too late, doctor?"

A nod answered him.

Before so profound a grief, to offer consolation would have been grotesque. The spectators in the mortuary chamber simply looked in respectful silence upon this wretched man who, in a heap on his knees, piteously moaned:

"I alone should have died. Be merciful to her, yonder. She has suffered so much here below! Oh! cruel God! why did you not allow me to see her once more!"

After pressing his blanched lips upon the rigid face, Eugène Duprez solemnly walked out into the night air.

. . . . . .

By the time the faithful were summoned to another morning prayer from the top of Cairo's minarets, the news of the virtuoso's tragic end transpired in the European quarter of the city.

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In the garden of the Villa des Palmiers, near the hedge of prickly pears, his body had been found with a Damascus poniard still stuck in the right temple. A hasty examination revealed also two frightful gashes in the cardiac region. Maëstro Duprez was not known to have enemies, and no valuables were missing; furthermore, the loss of a woman he dearly loved easily proved a case of suicide to the local authorities.

In this sultry climate, the dead are quickly buried. Perhaps it is best thus in this particular instance, for, had an autopsy been made, it would have electrified everyone: the corpse was minus its most vital organ.

And the mystery might still remain unraveled because, on the night of Zuleika's death, no mortal eye saw her maniac brother leap the prickly fence, grinning like a drunken monkey, while in his bloody jaws he crunched a human heart.

THE END.

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